De Neutralibus & Medijs.

Grosly Englished, Iacke of both sides.

A GODLY AND A NEcessarie catholike admonition, touching *those that be NEVTERS*, holding vpon no certaine Religion, nor doctrine, *and such as hold with both partes, or rather of no part: very necessary to stay and stablish Gods elect in the true catholicke faith against this present wicked world.*

Seene and allowed.

APOCAL. PS. 3.

Thus sayth Amen, the faythfull and true witnesse, the beginning of the creatures of God: I know thy works that thou art neither hote nor colde. I would thou were eyther cold or hote. So then because thou art betweene both, and neither colde nor hote, I will spewe thee out of my mouth.

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1591.

BRITISH MUSEUM

¶ The Preface to the Reader.

Aint Paul in the beginning of his moste worthie graue Epistle to the Romanes, sayth thus: I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God vnto saluation to all that beleeue. In which word he hath comprehended two speciall poyntes of a christian man: that he should confesse the Gospel, and be of good comfort in confessing the Gospel. For it is not inough for a wise man to haue the right vnderstanding of the true doctrine of the Gospel by the helpe of the holy Ghost, but it is required of necessitie that he also vtter it faythfully and openly shewe it, that God may be glorified in the beleeuers: and that other folkes also may shake off their errours, which they are tangled in, and bee allured to receiue the trueth as Christ giueth warning. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good workes, and glorifie your father which is in heauen. Math.5.* And Paul sayth: *The beleefe of the heart iustifieth, but the mouth confesseth vnto saluation. Rom.10.* And Dauid sayth *I beleeued, and therefore I spake. Psal.116.* For like as a tree cannot be a good tree, except it

Rom.1.

Rom.10.

th, 12. bring forth good fruite, euen so cannot the fayth be a good fayth, whereout no outward tokens of life and goodnesse appeare. Howbeit this saying ought not to be taken as though I meant the vocation should be confounded, and as though it were lawfull for euery man that lusted to start vp into the pulpet, and there shewe his minde and teache other openly. But that it is necessarily required of euery one to confesse the Gospel in hys owne vocation and place.

Let those that be gouernours perswade themselues, that this is one of the principallest pointes of their office, which God hath placed them in, to force the blindnesse and corrupt doctrins to be dispatched, and wicked God-seruice bannished & that the true doctrine of the Gospel be purely, soundly, and faythfully preached vnto the people by fitte ministers. Let housholders instruct their Children godly in the principles and chiefe Articles of the Gospelles doctrines. Let teachers doe the same in theyr vocation. Let them godly, plainly, rightly, and faithfully plant the Gospel of Christ. Let them not dissemble. Let them not play the crafrie iugglers: Let them not comber mens consciences. 1. *Pet.* 3. And let euerie one when hee is asked, render accompt of his fayth in Christ and his Gospel, not haltingly but plainely, according to the third commaundement: Thou shalt not take the name of the

Lord

Lord thy God in vayn. Where *Paul* ſpeaketh of confeſsing the Goſpell, which no man ought to bee aſhamed of, hee giueth playne ſignification that hys minde is to haue euerie one to lay a ſure groundworke of the heauenly doctrine, which the ſonne of GOD hath preached. For it is not poſsible for anie man to be able to make a true and conſtant confeſsion of the Goſpell, ſpeciallie when there is moſte certaine daunger preſently before hys eyes, except hee both vnderſtand the doctrine aright, and exerciſe hys conſcience therewith, and perceiue by often experience, that his conſcience (if it be toſſed or any way troubled with tentations) can quiet it ſelfe in none other doctrine but in onely this.

Manie at the beginning when the trueth by the decreed pleaſure of God, beganne to ſhewe a glimmering of light in *Germanie*, were wonderous feruent, and ſet the better legge afore ſtoutly. For it was an eaſie matter for them to crake and prate at that time, for the croſſe of perſecution which tryeth who be true beleeuers, as gold is tried in the fire, was thought to haue bene ſomewhat farther off than it was. But nowe many are become ſo lamentably light minded, and ſlide and ſhrinke ſo faſt, that it is a token that they neuer learned the principles and foundation of the Goſpelles doctrine aright.

For if they had learned them, they would not be so sore ashamed of the doctrine that they are not afrayd almost to shake of the name it selfe, they would not seeke so narrow shiftes, nor play the iugglers to winde themselues out of danger. Therfore such men as professe themselues Christians, and yet haue not the through vnderstanding of the principall Articles of Christes doctrine, are nothing els but vayne bubbles in the water, which sodainly swell, and there start vp and stand as though they were great matters, and yet assoone as a light puffe of winde hitteth vppon them, they vanish away againe, yea for the moste part they fall away of themselues without outward force by reason of their thinne substance, and turne to water agayne from whence they started vp. *Paul* therefore requireth not an hipocritical but a true direct confessing of the Gospel, where hee sayth, I am not ashamed of the gospel. Then afterward he telleth the cause why he is not ashamed nor any man ought to be ashamed. For it is the power of God to saue all that beleeue. In these wordes he both defineth the gospel of the principal effect, and expresseth the moste high comfort, which ought to ease the dread of daungers in confessing of the Gospell, He sayth the Gospel is the power of God that saueth all beleeuers. What greater thing can be spoken of this doctrine, when a man is pressed with the dreades of conscience, that is,

when

when he feeleth the heauie lumpe of ſinnes, ſeeth the wrath of God, and eternall deſerued paines: The deuill requireth that is due to him by reaſon of ſinne; Death alſo goeth about to execute his office, and hell demandeth that is his own. What worldly power is of ſo great ſtrength in this behalfe, as is able to deliuer vs out of ſo great harms, and reſtore vnto vs righteouſneſſe, life, and ſaluation. For wee are not guiltleſſe ſo as theſe enemies fall vppon vs without cauſe, which were ſome comfort of conſcience, but they may by the moſt iuſt iudgement of God exerciſe tyrannie vpon vs for euer world without ende. For we haue ſubdued our ſelues through ſinnes vnto their gouernement of our owne voluntarie free minde. And that no man is able eyther to ſaue himſelfe or anie other, death is a moſte perfite ſure witneſſe, which hath rid all out of the worlde, that euer bare life, neyther ſhall any man or woman eſcape his violence vnto the worlds end. But this poore runnagate *Paul* is confidently bold to affirme in this place, that the goſpel of Chriſt which he preacheth, hath a wonderful force and power, that it is able to rid vs wretched folks out of theſe euerlaſting euils, to put to flight and conquere all our moſt cruell enemies, and to reſtore vnto vs the the louing fauor of God, righteouſneſſe and eternall life. For this way to ſaue by, liked almightie God after none other ſorte, but that hee would of

his

his mercy and for the death of his sons sake, aswell receiue them that beleue his promises declared & set forth in his vndoubted written word, as to giue them righteousnesse, life, and euerlasting saluation: As *Paule* sayth: *After that the worlde in Wisedome knew not God through Wisedome, it pleased God through the foolishnesse of preaching to saue them that beleeue.* And therof it is rightly called the word of life. But as for all other doctrines howe excellent soeuer they be, they are in this case vnprofitable, vayn, and of no value. For looke in what poynt they be the moste auaileable, they shew some consolations, how miseries and euill intreating that chance to a man in this life, ought to be manfully borne and ouercome, that a iolly stout man should not shamefully cast downe his heart altogither, and desteine his honestie. But as for the heauy griefes of conscience, of death, and damnatiō, they neyther rid vs of them, nor swage them one iote. But this Gospell of Iesus Christ doth quiet and helpe the conscience perfectly. For it bringeth moste vndoubted sure forgiuenesse of sinnes for Christes sake, and dispatcheth away the threatninges and power of the lawe, deathe, the diuell, and of hell. For when sinne is put away, it cannot be chosen but the violence of all enemies must needes not onely be broken, but quite dispatched away: and then it followeth that wee are in fauour with God, and made inheritors of euerlasting

Corin. 1.

hilip. 2.

ohn 6.

lasting life. And howe fortuneth it, that this word alone is of so great strength? For it ie the power of God, sayth Paul, that is, God according to hys eternall and maruellous wisedome hath founded and established the kingdom of his sonne, wherein men are borne anewe and saued, in his worde: and in the same word he himselfe will be mightie and of effectuall power. As for other doctrines, they haue not this high commendation of honor, that they were the power of God. Indeede they be the noble good giftes of God which all men ought to vse with thankesgiuing: but they are not that power of God, whereby the wrath of God is taken awaie, and whereby men are deliuered from the Lordship of death, the diuell, and hell. This reall title, the Gospell of Christ which was declared out of the eternal fathers bosome, chalengeth onely to it selfe. Therefore where Christ sayth: He that heareth you heareth me. And, It is not you that speake, but the spirite of God which is in you, teacheth vs concerning this power, that God doth giue righteousnesse and euerlasting life to all beleeuers, through the word. Furthermore the selfe same worde that teacheth the benefites of Christ, is rightly called also the power of God, because it abideth and endureth for euer: neither can it by any force or craft either of the world or the diuel, (which seek always to do mischiese) be ouerthrown or brought to confusion: As Esay. 1. Math. 16.

Christ

Christ sayth, There shall no gates of hell preuaile agaynst it. For albeit this word that was sent from heauen hath bin sometimes most filthily mangled and darkened, so that horrible errors haue borne the rule farre and abroad, and the state of al things hath beene after such wise as though it shoulde be quite plucked vp by the rootes, yet in other places though among a very slender companie, it hath layne vndefiled, and when time came, it was brought foorth into light agayne by such instruments as God raised vp in the ministerie: whom he caused to gather his Church togither that truely acknowledged him, and truely called vpon him, and truely serued him: Therefore the Gospell of of Christ which *Paul* and other of the Apostles and Prophetes preached, is such a one, that no man may iustly be ashamed of it. For it is the verie power of God, because it both worketh saluation in the hearts of faithfull beleeuers, and cannot be vtterly extinguished. Whereto shall wee then be afrayd at the power and furious rage of the whole world, which now (as though it were starck mad) goeth about eyther to obscure or vtterly dispatch that heauenly light of Gods Gospel? The worlde hath some power, I say not nay, manie are mischieuously well skilled in craftie pollicie, wherewith their drift is to vndermine the truth of God, if they could by any possibly craft ouerthrow it, I grant: But they shal be none other in effect, than

if water

if water bubbles ſhould beate againſt rockes of Adamond.

For in aſmuch as *God* hath ſtrengthened this word with his power, they ſhal diſpleaſe God to their owne greateſt harme, whoſoeuer attempteth any thing againſt it: as the hiſtories of all ages doe plenteouſly report. Then ſeeing our ſaluation is conteined in this onely word, it were our duetie conſtantly to perſeuere in it, that wee ſuffer not our ſelues to be whirled about with euery bluſtring wind of doctrines. It were our duetie alſo not to be ſo ſore afrayd though our enemies the papiſtes ſought our deſtruction: but to confeſſe the goſpel conſtantly and let God alone with the ſucceſſe of the matter, for hee will not ſuffer his owne power to be weakned nor diminiſhed.

To the intent therefore I might moniſh and according to *Pauls* ſaying, exhort ſome, both to embrace the true doctrine of the Goſpel which is come to open light now in theſe latter dayes of the world, & to confes it and to keep it ſafe alſo: I haue vppon a godly purpoſe gathered certaine reaſons, that it is not lawful for a man either to be a plain Neuter, that is, to be without any certaine religion, and paſſe vpon no doctrine: or to halt on both ſides at once, that is to be deſirous to be ioyned in familiar friendſhip both with the defenders of corrupt doctrine, and them that maintain pure doctrin al at once, vnder what pretence

ſoeuer

ſoeuer it be. Howbeit my mind was not to offend any mans perſon, but only purpoſed to reaſon vpon the matter it ſelfe as modeſtly as I coulde out of the foundations of holy Scripture, ſo farre as God gaue me leaue: and I truſt I ſhall in a maner ſatisfie them that iudge me with indifferent hearts. But againſt the ſnatching of *Perſe Pick-quarell*, I ſhal peraduenture haue no remedie. For I doubt not but ſome will conſtrue me crookedly inough, as the verſe ſayth. *Conſcius ipſe ſibi, de ſe putat omnia dici.* He that hath a gilty cõſcience thinketh euery thing ſpoken by him. But I deſire all men to weigh the importance of the matter without priuate affections, and conſider beforehand, in what ſtate they will appeare another day before the iudge Chriſt, which ſhall require a reckening of vs al at his laſt iudgement. I meddle not now with politicall orders of the world, but of the conſcience, in what kind of doctrine it can quiet it ſelfe, and of ſaluation of ſoule. And albeit I doe well inough vnderſtand mine owne infancie and childiſh tongue in compariſon of ſo many moſt excellent, moſte learned, and moſte graue wiſe men, whom God hath ſtirred vp in many places at this moſt fortunate time, which exceed me moſt farre both in learning and practiſe of things, and could haue handled this matter much more notably than I can do, yet foraſmuch as God of his great mercy hath called me vnto this miniſterie in the

church, I thought it my duty alſo to beare and preſent mine offring vnto the Lords altar, not doubting but he will take it in good part, although it is not comparable with other mens giftes. Chriſt maketh ſignification that hee was not diſcontent with the two farthings which the poore widdow caſt into the treaſure houſe, and therefore he will not be diſpleaſed at my one farthing which I now exhibite. This I thought good to dedicate vnto thee, gentle Reader. For that there is nothing in al this world that bewtifieth and becometh a man ſo much, as liberall bringing vp in good letters: ſpecially if hee ſet his minde vpon godlineſſe withall, which ought to be gouernour and limitour of all other ſciences. Let other make much of their riches and worldly power, which are ſlippery goods and fall away in a moment. But a minde well husbanded and furniſhed with learning, and ſpecially godlineſſe, are euerlaſting riches. The wicked and moſt vngratious people of al, haue worldly riches as well as the good and godly: but they haue not honeſt learning and godlineſſe ſo well as they. Thus I beſeech God the father of our Lord Ieſu Chriſt, to keepe vs all in the one and true doctrine of the Goſpel, and preſerue the ſame vnto our poſteritie, and ſuffer it not to be vtterly deſtroyed by the deuils workmanſhip. *Fare you heartily well.*

A godly

A godly and a necessarie admonition *concerning* Neuters *and such* as deserue the grosse name of *Iacke of both sides.*

MEN in al ages haue iudged that the diuersities of religions and doctrines doe cause alterations of mens minds, and sundrie changes, and bring discommodities vnto realmes. And for that cause there haue beene alwayes many flirters and drie mockers of religions, and specially of that religiõ which God himselfe hath set forth and ordained. And of the learned sort there haue bene not a few, that would apply themselues vnto the willes of the high estates, (like gay fine lookes for their Lordes owne tooth) and seeke some sleightie quiet meanes, by patching two or three religions of contrary sortes togither, as well to take away the troubles of schismes, as to maintaine peace, and the state of things present the better and (as they thought) the more in safegard. This was the originall fountain (doubtlesse) that the Turks Alcoran sprong out of, and many other eluish changes and horrible mingle mangles of religiõs had their beginning of, which, it is not possible peraduen-

peraduenture to plucke vp cleane by the roots while the worlde goeth about. It is no maruell therefore though those most noisome mischiefes come vp thicke and threefolde nowe in this last doting age of the lying world (for they began a great while ago) and grow and beare the swinge more & more, seeing Christ tolde beforehand that the last season of the world should be the filthie sinke of al wickednesse, insomuch that it shalbe almost a doubt, whether the sonne of God when hee commeth downe from his secret seate vnto iudgement, shall finde fayth on earth. And we are all ouerwhelmed almost with so great darknesse, and are so purre-blinde so that we cannot see these so haynous mischiefes, nor much abhorre them: no, we rather ioyne our selues to them in a maner of our owne voluntarie minde. There is no small payne therefore hanging ouer this last season, seeing all countries are giuen to godlesse voluptuousnesse so farre and wide, yea to such godlesse voluptuousnesse, that the most cleare light of Gods Gospel, which through the great mercie of God hath shines bright in these latter dayes, and doth by the bounteous benefite of God cast light yet still, is clothed, and is not alonely troden vnder foote of many men, but also which is the more vnworthie and more noy-

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some, men compt it a light trifling matter, nay marrie, they recken it a singular wittie part, that they can craftily cloke and dissemble religion, and handle themselues in all outward affaires after such sort, as if a man were familiarly linked to both parts, not altogither gone from the Papistes, least he be reckoned a stubburne fellowe, not vtterly denorced from the Gospellers, least he be called an Apostata: and by that shift to walke as it were in the middle and most safe way, to be indifferent to both sides, to keepe peace substance, honour, and dignitie safe, and not altogither nor fluttishly to forsake religion, and yet for all that, to seeme addict to what religion a man will. This matter I say is no small mischiefe which the diuell in this filthie sinke-hole of the worlde bewitcheth and inspireth folkes withall. For by this meanes mens heartes by little and little ware faynt more and more, the trueth is kept in couert and suffereth violence, confessing of the Gospell is become mumbudget, Martyrs ware geason, and Christ is altogither buried. And this mischiefe is pleasaunt and gate at a blush, but it is a more dangerous matter than men take it for, noursing the lutter of all abhomination, as it were vnder a great swoine Tunne-bellied paunch, and is in deede a bore concerning all mischiefe.

Now seeing the matter is euen so, and this mischiefe creepeth on (like a canker) and spreadeth it selfe dayly broader and broader, and infecteth very manie folkes of all estates with his moste pestilent contagious infection: surely it were very necessarily requisite, that those whome GOD hath ordained to be watchmen on his Tower, shoulde not be carelesse as though there were no daunger in hand: they should not plaie the dumme dogges, or talke of nothing but as though all were well: but forasmuch as moste present perill of soules is before our eies, they shoulde be diligent, and like faythfull trustie men they shoulde priuately and openly resist these so great mischiefes: they should monish and exhort all men to confesse the trueth plainly without halting, and let GOD alone with the rest. For it is his carge to care howe hee will keepe his Church and members, and traine them safely through the wilde raging waues of the red sea, when the ruffling Empires of the worlde shall come to naught. For euerie one is bound and constrained by the commaundement of GOD to linke himselfe surely to the trueth, and confesse it, yea if neede were euen with the danger of his life.

And albeit I measure my selfe by mine owne foote and perceiue howe vnfit a man I

am

am to treat of this controuersie at large, namely being so farre spred abroad, yet vppon certaine considerations I am purposed presently to talke of some pointes at least touching this matter, to the intent I may shewe in fewe wordes as it were poynting with my finger, that it is not lawfull nor a small trifling matter for a man to be an Epicure, or to dally in religion, and wreath the trueth of the Gospel to his owne priuate commodities, as he lusteth himselfe. And I trust that God will take this childish stammering tongue of mine in thankfull part seeing it lispeth of his glorie and prayse. And although it be not allowed of all men in this moste corruptible worlde, it shall make no great force. Paul saith: if I went about to please men, I could not be the seruant of Christ.

Now I will briefly speake of two questions: first whether it be lawfull for any man to be a Neuter, and then whether a man may lawfully keepe a meane, or be a Iacke of both sides. And when I haue knitte vp these in fewe wordes, and ministred but euen as it were couert matter for men to muse vpon, I shall then leaue the whole case for euery man to weie and discusse more aduisedly and more throughly with himselfe. And before we buckle vs to our businesse, it is good to knowe

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that I reason not presently of anie open blasphemous sortes of folkes, as of Turkes or Iewes, or other such like Idolatrous people, but of them most chiefly which are among the people of God, that is to say, in the church, and are not altogither godlesse, as they think themselues, and as they would haue other to iudge of them: neither are they of the base common sort of people, nor vnlearned sillie soules, but passe other men in manie other gifts of nurture and goodly qualities, & are such men as would not be reprooued nor found fault withall, but looke earnestly to be praised for their singular wit and sobernesse.

Who be Neuters.

Those therefore be Neuters, which when men varie in their doctrine, that is, when two doctrines are so contrary the one to the other, that there is hard holde among great learned men about them, assent openly to none of them all, but abide in a meane, either defying both partes and deuising some peculiar opinions of their owne braines, which they loue and set much by: or else gaping for a determination of doctrines, in some generall counsaile where those that beare the swinge of the church, and all the whole world should acknowledge and embrace the trueth, and where it should be set forth vnto all men after such sort, as none durst be so hardie as to speake once against it. But

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But in the meane season while it commeth not thus to passe, they keepe them in a meane, they doubt in their minde, they restraine and suspend their consent, they neither allow nor disallow either part. But those are Iackes of both sides, or walkers in a meane, which vse themselues after a contrarie fashion, that is, they hang on both sides, and do what they can to be in fauour with both parts: some popish toyes they follow to come in fauour with them, for feare of putting themselues and their pelfe in hazard. On the other side, their drift is to content the Gospellers also, least it shoulde be thought they doe against the trueth that they had acknowledged: And all this vpon a wonderous forecast of peace and tranquilitie. Such men as are not earnestly bent to any religion, and referre all to be set forth, allowed and debated by a counsell, or leane both to this side and to that side, are worthy to beare the name of Neutres, and Iacks of both sides. But this (I trust) shall plainely appeare by that that followeth. Therefore I will make no mo wordes in this behalfe. Of these indifferent discreet wise men there are diuers kindes, First in a generalitie there be two sortes: for some are Neuters and Iacks of both sides in temporall and politicall worldly matters, which be subiect vnto reason, so as they may

Who be Iackes of both sides.

be rightly discerned and iudged by reason. For God hath graffed a certaine woonderful light into the nature of man, which this present life may in a manner be gouerned by. Howbeit, it is greatly abated and obscured through originall sinne, so that manie times that excellent iudgement of reason is deceiued, and readeth in manie things at a venture as the blind man casteth his staffe.

There be other Neuters and lack of both sides in diuine matters and Gods owne holy matters, which pertaine to the conscience and soulehealth. Those be not naturally subiect vnto reason, but they are and ought to be taken for true: why? because God hath plainly opened them. These I nowe properly speake of. And of these there are many sortes. Some regarde no kinde of doctrine at all, and so they tell euery bodie: they defie both the papistes part and the Gospellers, and liue after their owne fashion and fantasie, eyther vtterly without religion not passing whether they knowe the trueth or not, or else they imagine them opinions of their owne, and those they sticke stoutly to, yea when they haue not a worde to say, yet they will not yeeld nor chaunge their iudgement, but as it were vnmoueable meere stones stick fast in their place. Those may truely and properly be called Epicures

pictures and Godlesse persons, men both wayward and stubburne. Some are secret and craftie halters on both sides, that they may be as it were all one with the Gospellers in outward countenance, but yet they beare the heartier good will inwardly to the papistes the enimies of the Gospell. In their heartes they allow papistrie, and nowe and then they belch out no lesse by parables in their communication. As for the opinions that they haue once conceiued, and specially such as they haue beene nusled vp in from their tender yeares, they keepe still tooth and nayle, and hide them too too diligently within themselues. They wish in their sleeue that al poperie were set vp againe, yet for feare and worldly aduauntage sake, they beare a fayre face outwardly, and dare not speake openlie what their heart thinketh. These may be called, and are indeede pestilent hipoicrites, because they blowe neyther hot nor colde.

Other Iacks of both sides there are much like vnto these we spake of last, but yet more craftily and more vngraciously than al the rest. For they play whip Iacke, and turne them woonderfully, and halt on both sides so nimbly, that they doe what they can to please and content both partes. They behaue themselues so when they are with the papistes, that

they seeme to be of their minde. Contrariwise among the Gospellers they make it goodlie, because they would seeme not to haue vtterlie cast away nor forsaken the trueth.

In some things they frame themselues like vnto the Papistes the enemies of the Gospel, they beare with manie thinges, they receiue manie thinges, and they dissemble manie thinges, that they thinke verily they are of their opinion. Contrariwise their talke is such vnto the other part, that no man can possibly perceiue ame manifest shrinking in them. They seeke narrow waies, that some maner agreement may be had, at the least in outward matters. They trauaile till they sweat again, to maintaine tranquilitie not onely in temporall affaires but in ecclesiastical matters most principally, as they make their boast, and may not abide them that dare once hisse against their pollicies. What name I shall decke these men withall, I cannot almost tell. For they differ among themselues one from another woonderfully. But let them be called Martin manie colours, Watkin Wauerours, and Barnarde Bellimountes, that cannot turne their cloke as the winde bloweth, and make a concord betweene Christ and Belial. Well, wee may call them after their Godfather on the Steeple toppe, Wethercockes. These people

people will bee compted to exceede, and to be farre wiſer than other folkes. Indeede they be farre wickeder, for their fetch is all for their owne ſafetie, and yet vnder a faire cloked pretence to bewitch and bleare the ſimple and vnlearned ſillie ſoules eies withall, and to drawe innumerable other into the pit with them.

But for ſhortneſſe ſake let vs (as wee began) call the firſt ſort Neuters, and all the reſt Iackes of both ſides. And if anie mo come in the way, include them within theſe generall ſortes. Howbeit there ought to be a diligent difference put betweene weakelinges, which be deſirous to learne and to be taught, and our Neuters, and Iackes of both ſides. For my communication here is of ſuch as offend more of malice than of weakeneſſe and ignorance. As for the weake and ſuch as doe what they can to come to the trueth, and if they might fortune to heare it, woulde moſte deſiroully and with thankſgiuing receiue it, we as reaſon is, beare patiently withall, and beſeech God to beholde and helpe their groninges, that they may receiue ſome glimmering out of the bright ſun of the Goſpell.

But as for my Neuters, and Iacks of both ſides, they are almoſt paſt amendment, as it ſhalbe opened afterward.

Now

* Now let vs shew at fewe wordes, out of what fountayne these men, which follow their owne fantasies, spring so fast, and what maketh them to become such manner of folkes. For they came all out of one fenne. But to speake at a worde, they are bred either of carelesse securitie and contempt of Gods worde: (For some folkes are so light and so vnconstant minded, that they speake not in earnest of anie thing: and thinke it a verie small matter to dallie in religion a litle, and to abuse it at their pleasure as they thinke meete) or els of Philosophie and naturall reason, which goeth euer about to make an hotch potch of Gods worde and reason together, and after the rule of reason to search and to measure all thinges, and to iudge what is to bee liked, and what is not. And it seemeth consonant to mans reasons that God accepteth men for the righteousnesse of their owne vertuous deedes sakes, though not altogither, yet in some part at the least. For God is a most righteous spirite, which requireth righteous deeds as meete as it is, and giueth reward for them, and abhorreth and punisheth those workes that are vnrighteous. That is a pleasant and a gaie concorde therefore, whiche coupleth mans workes and Christes workes togither: that man is accepted first freely for Christes

sake

sake, but not freely afterward in the end, but for his owne charities sake, so that he maketh his iustification perfitly vp himselfe. But when these same men heare manifest testimonies brought out both of the old testament and newe, which teache that wee are pronounced righteous, or righteousnesse is imputed vnto vs onelie through the merite of Christ by onely faith freely without the worthinesse of our merites: that geare draweth their mindes this way and that way, that they hang in a doubt, and cannot tell which way they ought rather to leane to. Reason calleth this way: the authoritie of Gods worde biddeth that waie. These discreete wittie men also thinke thus. Lo of the one part those that haue rule of the Church and worldly gouernment, confirme and strengthen their doctrines with some testimonies of Scripture, with the authoritie of fathers, with the consent of certaine counsailes, and with the opinion of long continuance: and these are learned and holie men, and it is not like that they are cleane destitute of the holie Ghost.

But on the other part they doe the same, and much more strongly: they pike out the foundation of al the whole scriptures, and lay them out openly before men, they report them to the purest sentences of fathers, and to the

authoritie

authoritie of the purest Counsailes, and shew the consent of the Church in all ages continually from the beginning. Neuertheleſſe they are but a fewe men in number, and of no famous estimation. To bee short both parts seeme to haue some trueth on their sides. They thinke therefore: what shift shall I make in this behalfe? It is much better for me to bee a Neuter in so great a controuersie, than to take vp the strife to mine owne harme.

So men that loue honestie (as they would be taken) are offended with the vices of both partes. They thinke, lo on the Papistes part there are manie fowle faultes and vices, Idolatrie, inuocation of dead Saintes, defiling of the Sacramentes, Simonie, wiuelesse whoremonging, &c. On the contrarie part among the Gospellers there be manie imbecillities, there is no discipline, there reigne deceites, drunkennesse and riot. So both partes haue very many thinges worthie reproch. And when they haue conceiued such a fantasticall imagined toy in their heades, as Plato had, or rather as the Anabaptistes haue, what maner a thing the congregation ought to be, that is without spotte or spoyle, Therefore they thinke it a wittier part for them to abſteine from both sides, till those

offences

offences be taken away. They see the power and successe of the one part, and iudge their luckie state to be a testimonie that God loueth them: Againe they beholde the misfortunes and miseries of the other part, which they take for tokens that God is displeased with them. At a worde, they compare the quietnesse of the papistes, and the troubles that the other part suffereth togither. In all these matters reason toyleth idlily, and casteth very manie folkes heartes headlong into the full streame or gulfe of all doubtes.

Thirdly, they be Neuters and Iacks of both sides, that shunne the feare of daungers, and the crosse of persecution, which for the moste part keepeth companie with the confessing of the trueth, as the shadow doth with the bodie. And all this commeth to passe, by reason they are ignorant of the worde of GOD. For those that wauer and doubt after this fashion were neuer true Christians: they neuer laid the foundations of sound doctrine aright, and they are the seede that was throwne vppon the high way, and vpon thornes and stones, which can bring forth no fruite. They set more by the thinges that are corporall than euerlasting. They are and remaine still the Children of this worlde, farre wiser than the Children of light in their generation.

But

But I will talke no longer of these matters, for they shall be touched afterward againe in their owne place. Hereof (except my wit faile me) it may bee gathered in a maner, whereof these double faced doubters spring. And albeit some make one pretence, some another, yet they may bee referred to this one summe, as I take it, Now therefore the question is not altogither to be flirted at, whether it be free for a man to be a Neuter, that is to abstaine vtterly from both partes, the one beeing contrarie to the other, and followe his owne witte in the meane time, till the trueth be opened, and be allowed of all men from the highest to the lowest. The aunswere is simple, plaine, and true, that there is a great difference betweene temporall matters of the worlde, and sacred matters of the soule. In temporall affaires a man may blasphemously, nay mary rightfully sometime keepe a meane and suspend his iudgement, that is to say, in such causes as be intricate and darke, and passe the capacitie of mans reason. For there be verie manie naturall thinges, which the weakenesse of mans witte is not able to trie and searche out. And so in actuall thinges, there be not a fewe that passe mans vnderstanding, and are not opened plaine inough yet to this houre. As when they dispute in naturall thinges,

how

how the moste goodly manie coloured Raynebowe is engendred in the cloud, of what matter the winde is made indeede, from whence it taketh his beginning, and where it giueth ouer, or other suche like, it is not throughly tried nor knowne. For a man may perceiue in that matter, that reason is very weake, seeing it is not able with her quickenesse to describe so much as these lower matters: The Philosophers cannot tell, from whence this darke ignorance is mingled among the most excellent light which was created in man. But the worde of God telleth that it commeth of sinne. Adam while hee was in his entire perfection, discerned moste readily the natures of all thinges that bare lyfe, and of all herbes, and therefore hee gaue euerie thing a name agreeable to the nature of it, as Scripture doth report. Whereby it is plaine that hee had a great and a notable knowledge in all other natures also. But after his fall, that gift begamne to vanish awaie more and more, namely in his posteritie, and that that remaineth in vs is verie slender, but yet in mans life it is both great and necessarie: It also beareth witnesse of GOD and sheweth that the shadowes (or the decayes rather) of Gods workemanship doe remaine yet still, which the sonne of God must needes restore,

The Rainbow.

The wind.

and

and that shall be done perfectly in the resurrection. But to returne to the matter. It is not lawfull for all this, for a man in all worldly matters to restraine his assent, to doubt, and to agree vnto no iudgement. For some are knowne by their principles, which are eyther deduced out of their principles by good consequence, or else they are knowne and discerned perfectly inough by experience. In such cases verily, an honest man may not lawfully doubt: as that twise two are foure, a man may not lawfully make a doubt of it, because that maner of knowledge is grauen into mans nature. That a man shoulde doe one good turne for another, and that none ought to hurt another, all men know by nature most certainly. Wherefore if any man will yet still stand in doubt, he is iustly compted not to bee a man, but the monster of a man, and without all witte.

So if the question be asked, whether voluptuousnesse or vertue be the end that man is made to, it is not lawfull to be a Neuter. For the verie reasons that are deduced of nature it selfe, doe euidently declare, that not voluptuousnesse but rather vertue, (that is to say, the acknowledging of God) is the ende whereunto man is ordained. For the lawe of nature is so graffed in euerie one of vs, that it represen-

representeth and sheweth (as much as remaineth stil on our corrupt nature) the chief workman, as it were in a glasse. Therfore they that say, voluptuousnesse is the end whereunto man is made, are led by a certaine blind brutish affection rather than by the iudgement of nature. But as for those that leaue the matter in a meane, and followe neither part, as though it were a matter aboue mans vnderstanding, they are driuen doubtlesse of all diuels in hell, And yet there were among them that liued as nature led them without the light of Gods word, which contended openly, that a man must doubt euen in these matters that I nowe speake of: and affirmed that the trueth is incomprehensible, that is, cannot possible be attained: as those that followed Plato, Hirillus, and Pirrho, a man moste vnreasonable madde, which taught that nothing can be certainly knowne, that all thing must bee doubted of, or (as I may so terme it) that Neutralitie is to bee allowed. As, that I am nowe in this place, that twise foure are eight, that a man seeth with his eies, that he heareth with hys eares, and such lyke, hee sayd all is vncertaine. But it is a manifest and more then a deuillish madnesse, to put no difference at all betweene those thinges that God hath graffed into nature, and would haue to be rules for men to doe by in theyr life time;

and those thinges which the wit of man is able either with much adoe, or else not at all to atteine. These monsters with their followers are iustly hissed out of the doores. For what is it els to deny so manifest and so natural things, but to fight with nature, nay, rather with God himselfe? Those thinges also which are confirmed by handsome, and not altogether absurd reasons, a man may not lawfully infringe or weaken without good aduisement. For it is the propertie of a good and a sober wit, not to loue cauillations, and in matters of more doubt to embrace and follow the sentence, that is more to the purpose, and the more like to be true.

Holde fast therefore the difference betweene hidden and perplexe matters, and those that are subiect and expressely set forth before all mens eyes and vnderstanding: or be strengthened at least with tollorable reasons. In matters that be obscure and intricate a man may put off his consent till the trueth bee knowne. But when it is once brought forth and openly shewed, none that is in his right witt ought to say agaynst it.

After like fashion in pleas of law, in seditions and tumultes, when the cause is doubtfull and disputable, a good man may without hurt of conscience be a Neuter. For it may

be, that in politicall cauſes both partes may ſometimes erre from the trueth, beeing deceiued with the likelihood of the trueth. Therefore it is a more ſure way for a man to remayn a Neuter and in doubt ſtill, vntill the trueth be euidently ſhewed. Neuertheleſſe Solon which was the nobleſt wiſe man of his time, made a lawe, that it ſhould bee lawfull for no man to be a Neuter in publicke matters of variance, becauſe (as Gellius expoundeth it) that way was thought to be of very much importauce to eſtabliſh concord. Beſides that a Neuter might bee reckoned and accuſed as a traytour of both partes. But of this maner of ſentence I will make no longer talke heere. Only let it ſuffiſe that I haue briefly ſhewed, that ſome thinge in worldly and ciuill caſes be vncertaine and doubtfull, wherein a good man may be a Neuter, till the errour bee taken away: and that ſome thinges are ſo certaine and ſo manifeſtly plaine, that no man may ſtand in doubt of them, except hee will brawle with his owne conſcience, and abandon all certaintie. Solon.

But in ſacred matters, pertaining to Gods glorie and oure ſoules health, the caſe is farre otherwiſe. For I reaſon not heere of the iudgementes that are borne with vs naturally and wee knowe them without a teacher.

as are the principles of speculation and practise, which I spake of a little before, as, all a whole thing is greater then any part of it, that Parentes ought to be honoured, and such like, or those that are knowne by experience or anie meanes else but of the secret mysteries of God, which (as the Apostle saith) no eye hath seene, no eare hath heard, nor haue entred into anie mans heart: which therefore bee certayne, sure, and perpetuall, because GOD hath opened them, not in figures but plainly, and would haue euery body both to know them and beleeue them. But to make the matter more plaine and cleare, I shall deuide it as it were into two formes.

First there bee somethinges in Scriptures euer darke, which are not allthroughly openned, but are deferred vnto the life to come: and diuerse men haue diuerse opinions of them.

Then there be other thinges that are manifested, disclosed and declared, which GOD would haue to be knowne in this life. Indeede I make not this distinction too narrowly and too superstitiously, if anie man lusteth to deuide it more finely, I hinder him not. Touching ceremonies instituted in the Church by the authoritie of man, forasmuch as they swarue somewhat from this matter, my purpose is

not

not to speake any further of them in this place. Of the first sorte, such be, as are no articles of the faith, nor be so necessarie, but that we may be saued though wee knowe them not. But forasmuche as mans nature is curious, and goeth about to search out secrets, and namely those that are hidden priuie by the singular counsaile of God, that is the cause why men doe varrie in opinions, so that one thus, and an other after an other sorte hath iudged of them. In this varietie of opinions, and in such matters as eyther are not throughly opened, or the exact knowledge of them is not required vnto saluation, we may restraine our assent and subscribe to neither part, as in a matter to deepe for our capacitie perfectly to enquire of. As for example. In the Scriptures it is tolde before-hand that this worlde shall once be destroyed, and the quicke and the dead iudged: Thus farre it is an article of our fayth. But the time when, what yeare, what daye, and what moment that shall bee, is no where expressed cleerely and distincly in the rolles of holie writte. And Christ when hys Apostles asked him, made them this answere: It is not for you to knowe the times or the seasons, which the father hath set in his own power. Actes, 1. And, concerning that daie and houre no man knoweth, nor the Angels of

The certaine day of dome.

heauen, but onely the father.

Also, the dayes shall bee shortened for the electes sake. *Matth.* 24. And *Paule* sayth. The daie of the Lord shall come as theefe in the night. 1. *Thessalon.* 5. Therefore as concerning the prefixed and very exact tyme, when the whole building of this worlde shall bee dissolued, and all the dead shall at the sounding of the trumpet, and the voyce of the Archangell, come out of their graues: it is not an article of the fayth, but a riddle, that we perchance shall neuer bee able to reade. But men now a dayes (as their nature is passing curious, and harpeth vppon thinges forbidden) gesse at a venture. They bring out Elias saying of the sixe thousand yeeres, wherewith the workes of the sixe dayes accorde. There bee some prophecies in Daniell, in the sayinges of Christ and the Apostles, and in the Apocalips: and some signes also are spoken of to come before, which are nowe come to passe before our eies. Of these and certaine other textes chafed together, the time is sucked out when the worlde shall haue an end. And there haue beene some double diligent and busie witted men, that letted not to appoynt the verie yeare and day in open writinges, but when it happened not euenly after their reckoning, it made some of them ashamed, and reproued

them

them of notable vnaduised temeritie. And albeit no man (as I suppose) will call it sinne to trie and boult out some matters that are somewhat secret and hidden in the darker prophecies of the holy scripture, yet it is as free for a man, not to assent in post hast to thinges that be vncertaine.

Therefore seeing alswell the coniectures be vncertaine, what coniectures soeuer they be, as also Christ hath told before, that it is a matter not possible to bee boulted out, no not so much as of the Angels in heauen, which passe vs not a little in wisedome and knowledge of secret thinges. A godly man may without hurt of conscience in this behalfe doubt, and confesse freely, that hee will leaue the matter in the midde way, because it is too high for mans reason possibly to perceiue, except God reueale it vnto him. There bee other matters also such as this is, but let vs come nowe to other opinions.

There are sundrie opinions, what the starre was that shone to the wise men in their iourney to Christ: whether it were an Angel, or a certaine starre so fashioned and gouerned of God, that it had a wonderfull course, applying it self meete for the wise mens passage. Doubtlesse the opinion of both partes seemeth like to bee true. For the mouing of it doth almost proue, The Starre.

that there was some reasonable thing in that flaming brightnesse. For it made no further hast then serued for the wise mens turne, and shewed the right way (as combrous as it was to hitte) through euerie by-way, now and then it hid it selfe, and at last it stoode straight ouer the house, where Christ was newly borne: in so much that it hanged downward, and poynted the very place where the babe lay. Therefore the reasonable course and place seeme not possible to agree fitly inough with a naturall starre, but rather vnto an angell, for angels are in other cases manie times seene in firie flames.

Contrariwise the power of God maketh all things possible, that it might haue bin thought a verie starre indeede. For who will say it is not possible for God, to create a newe starre in the honour of his most dearly beloued sonne and of that wonderfull worke, and to appoint it another place then the rest had, yea to make it to moue also after so maruellous a fashion, that when the wise men were so forward, it guided them the way still vnto Bethlehem, and there when it had done as it was appointed, it vanished awaie againe: God with one only word set all the whole court of heauen in order, and prescribed to the starres both that moue and shoote, their courses, which they

they holde on still vnto their appointed lymites, where they shall also chaunge. So indeede God might at his owne almightie will, moste easily bring to passe, that a verie stare shoulde shine bright in the ayre, and keepe this so wonderfull a race still vnto Christes maunger. Notwithstanding, forasmuch as it is no article of the faith, but a hidden matter and an opinion, and maketh small skill, whether of these mindes a man leaneth vnto, the soule catcheth no perill nor harme by it. Wherefore it is free for a man in this varietie of opinions, to keepe backe his assent, and be a Neuter.

It hath beene long in questions, and hard hold hath beene among Diuines, concerning the soule of man, whether it be engendred of hys owne naturall off-spring, or be engraffed into the lumpe of mans substaunce from heauen, seeing it beginneth to haue life in the mothers wombe: There is tough reasoning on both partes. The soule of Man.

Such as thinke it is not deriued from the parentes but instilled or rather engraffed from without, of God, alledge this saying: God breathed into his face the breath of life. After the same sorte they thinke euen now that man is created of GOD, so as their soules are brought downe out of heauen, and powred into the bodies. There are other coniectures

also, as that soules be certaine heauenly substances, and come not of the elementes, and that they are perpetuall and not mortall nor subiect vnto corruption as other members of a mans body are. Neither doo they thinke it consonant, that one soule is engendred of another soule, as one bodie is of another, seeing spirituall thinges cannot be changed after such maner of sortes.

On that other syde the opinion seemeth both Godly and like to bee true, to affirme, that soules are engendred matter indeede of naturall offspring, that is to say, that they are deriued from the soules of men by the wonderfull and almightie power of GOD, as all the condition of man is. And this is confirmed by no light harnessed reasons, nor without certaine testimonies of the Scripture which seeme to graunt the same. Originall sinne is graffed naturally into all men and women so sore, that the bodie is not onely defiled with it euen of nature, but also the soule is with the bodie both euill fauouredly arayed with sinne: and giltie before God of euerlasting wrathe and damnation, except it be regenerate and borne anew, whereby the spots of sinne are washed away by the worde, the Sacramentes, and the vertue of the holie Ghost. This seemeth not possible, that soules

Originall sinne.

which

which be pure and dearely beloued of GOD beeing seuerally framed, and closed within the bodie, shoulde assoone as they are closed in, be infect with the contagious venome of the corporall substance, and displease their maker so sore that for the foule sinnes sake which the soule brought not with it, but the Inne, (that is the bodie) committed which GOD sent the soule into, shoulde be enforced to suffer and suffeyne eternall paynes as well as the bodie.

Also it is certain in the wicked, that not onely their bodies which they receiued of the corrupt nature of their parentes shall be damned at the last day, but their soules also. Therefore how could God chose, but be partly the cause of sinne? how could he be but vnrighteous, if he had created and enspired a pure soule of it selfe, and yet straight wayes for all that wouldé compt it giltie, and damne it no lesse, then if it had committed in it selfe that sinne that is called Originall sinne? But the Psalme sayth: Thou art God that wouldest no iniquitie.

Paule sayeth, we were by nature, or wee are borne the children of Gods wrathe. If a pure soule bee ioyned to the bodily substaunce, whiche is deriued and defiled with sinne from hys Parentes, howe are wee then

borne

borne holie the children of wrathe: For it is certaine that Paul speaketh not onelie of the sinfull bodie, but of the soule also that is ioyned to the bodie, or of the whole man Dauid saith, Behold I was conceiued in wickednesse, and in sinne my mother bare me. He sheweth in plaine words that he hath all wholly, not after the soule euen from his mother, (that is, out of his mothers substance) Originall sinne, ignorance of God, doubtfulnesse, distrust, wauering motions from God, and readinesse vnto sinne. All these (saith he) are planted in hys nature from his mother. And therefore hys minde is, that he receiued a sinfull soule of his mother, by a certaine naturall generation also. Besides that, man doth beget man like to himselfe. But man is a reasonable creature, he is made not onely of a brutish bodie, but of a reasonable soule also. Therefore man begetteth not an vnperfect thing, that is to say, a bodie without a soule, but the bodie and soule togither.

It maketh no matter, though wee cannot discerne the maner howe, and though it seeme an absurditie, that one soule is deriued of another soule, one spirituall thing of another spirituall thing. For God is almightie, and like as he is able to make the bodie, which is composed of the elementes, eternall and vncorrup-

tible

ruptible, as all our bodies are (for among other articles, wee beleeue the resurrection of the bodie) euen so according to his owne Maiestie, he is able to conserue that order of nature which hee hath instituted from the beginning, and bring to passe that out of the heauenly matter which the soule hath, an other heauēly matter shall also spring and be begotten. But what meane I? Seeing all this whole matter is an obscure case yet still, and peraduenture God of his singular decreed counsaile will put off that question vnto the life in another world, and forasmuch as the soule catcheth no perill by it, therfore a man may freely leaue it in a meane, neither is it to bee reckened any heresie, whether a man hold on this side or that.

I remember that the reuerend father of blessed memorie, Doctor Martin Luther in a certaine disputation of this controuersie, reasoned manie thinges on this part that I last spake of, and that the excellent learned man, D. Pomerane did vehemently instant and beseeche him, that forasmuch as he had so weightie and so manie causes to defend his opinion with all that the soule commeth of naturall offspring, he would resolutely determine what sentence should bee giuen, but good Luther would not. He confessed plainly whereunto he would leane, but seeing Austen and other

graue

graue doctours of the Church, had left it as a matter in doubt, he said ý he would leaue it also in the meane as a matter not yet throughly inough discussed. Therefore in the 31. proposition of these themes, which begin *Verbum in Diuinitate*, he sayth. Those that haue thought the soule to come of naturall offspring, seeme to iudge not all contrary to the meaning of the scriptures, And in 46, Proposition. Albeit a christian man may with saint Austin and the whole church be ignorant of this matter without perill, &c. These examples haue I made somewhat the longer rehearsall of, that the rest of the same sort may so much the eallier be applied and discerned. Now by little and litle, I will drawe neere to the matter.

There be also in the Scriptures, namely articles of the fayth, which are both euident and vnchaungeable, so that no Neutralitie may be graunted in them. That is to say, God in mankinde which he made to hys owne likenesse, whereof his will is to be acknowledged and glorified both heere and in the life to come, hath his own selfe reuealed a certaine, cleere, and perpetual doctrine of his essence and will, as much as was necessarie inough vnto that knowledge and glorifiyng of him, and the saluation of our soules. This doctrine hee lapped not vp in darkenesse so as no man might bee

able

able to vnderstand it or expound it aright. For if it were like vnto Sibilles leaues (as they say) what good would it doe vs?

But he hath set it forth cleerely and plainly, so as no maner of man can finde any fault in it for obscuritie. Yea hee hath also adourned and confirmed that doctrine with verie manie suche myracles and testimonies, as no Religion neuer had. And in this worde of GOD, all godly folkes in all ages haue quieted themselues, that is, they were at a full poynt that according to this openlie declared will of God, they haue righteousnesse and life: and in this fayth they haue prayseed GOD, they haue called vpon God, and beene patient in troubles, when they haue beene wretchedly intreated. They haue also rightly instructed theyr posteritie, not in fantasticall dreames, but in the true doctrine which God himselfe hath openly proclaymed. God hathe also bounden all people throughout all the wide worlde vnto that word, (as I shall tell you anon:) And the worde of God wherein the knowledge and glorie of God, and the saluation of our soules is conteyned, is called a Mysterie, because it is onely the wisedome of God and not of man: that is to say, not knowne by nature. For albeit some sparkes of the lawe remayne yet still in man,

The worde of God is a Mysterie.

which

which should (doubtles) haue bin a great deale more excellent, if man had continued in his entier perfection of nature, yet concerning the true essence of GOD, and of the good will of God towardes vs sinners, of righteousnesse without the lawe, of inuocation in the name of the Mediatour, of patient sufferance on the crosse and in death, of the maner of the resurrection, and of eternall life, man had knowne nothing at all, had not God come out of hys secret seate, and declared these matters by open proclamation. And therefore this heauenly wisedome and doctrine of mans saluation must be drawne out of this original fountaine. God hath also declared his vnspeakable great mercie, in that he hath not onely brought this wonderfull and secret wisedome out of heauen, but also least it should bee forgotten of them that come after, and least they shoulde sayle as it were in so darke a night as no man might see nothing, and so keepe nothing of the doctrine in remembrance, hee caused it to be faithfullie registred by his instrumentes peculiarly appointed to that vse, in certaine sure Rolles, that is, in the writinges of the Prophetes and Apostles, whereout that doctrine might euidently be knowne vnto all people throughout all the whole worlde, and by this meanes to endure continually to the worldes ende.

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For that cause when tyrantes haue oftentimes gone about with fire and sworde to destroy the Prophetes and Apostles bookes, yet hath hee preserued them in all ages, and stirred vp godly and wholesome teachers, which in case the trueth and true seruice of God, haue beene at anie time violently assaulted by the members of the Deuill, haue wyped away and remoued corrupt expositions from the worde of God, as it were myst from the sunne, and brought it vnto the sound interpretation againe, This is such a maner a doctrine, that without it no man can possibly acknowledge God aright, nor call vppon God, nor glorifie God as he ought to doe, no, nor atteine righteousnesse, nor the holy Ghost nor yet eternall life. And therefore in this heauenly doctrine, or in the articles of the fayth, it shall be lawfull for no man to stand in doubt, or to make any halting on both sides of them, but it is necessary for euery body to know and embrace that trueth, and looke what is not agreeable vnto it, to turne away and renounce as erroneous and blasphemous. But what these Articles be, I reckon it lost labour to make ouer manie wordes in rehearsing of them in this place. They are plainly comprised in the Creeds of the Apostles, of Nice, and Athanasius, and those we iudge and beleeue

do agree with the perpetuall meaning of the prophets & apostles writings. Now therfore I will open two or three cause, why it is not free for a man to doubt in these articles, or to follow a certain mean iudgmēt between both.

Why a man may not doubt in the articles of the fayth.

The first reason is, because God himselfe hath reuealed that same word, and hath bounden all people of all nations by an vnchangeable commaundement, both to embrace, learne, and confesse this word. Deut. 4 You shall not adde vnto the worde which I spake vnto you nor take from it. Keep the precepts of the Lord your God, which I commaund you, Deut. 5. You shall not slide neither vnto the right hand nor to the left, but you shall walk by the way which your Lord hath commanded, that ye may liue, and that it may go well with you. Also Deut. 12. What I command thee, that onely doe vnto the Lord, putting nothing to, nor taking anie thing away. Such sentences as these, are oftentimes rehearsed in other places. So Iosua is bounden to the word, and is commaunded not to lay downe the booke of the lawe out of his handes, but to studie in it continually. For God deliuered vnto the people of Israel his worde not vncertaine, but certaine and plaine, and would haue all both to vnderstand it, and follow it, as many as purpose to be of

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the number that pleaseth him. And the Prophets declare, that they bring and set abroad the word of God: & therefore they require all people to harken to this word at their mouth as well as if God himself spake out of heauen without backe sliding or wauering. Esay by and by at the first dashe, maketh such a thundring, that he calleth heauen and earth to record. Harken sayth he O heauen and earth, what the Lord hath spoken. And in the 59. chapter, This is my couenant with them sayth the Lord My spirit which is in thee, & my words which I haue put in thy mouth, shall not depart from thy mouth nor from the mouth of thy seede saith the Lord, from this time forth and for euermore.

In the new testament the father of heauen himselfe establisheth this commaundement, when hee beareth record vnto his sonne. For thus he maketh open proclamation out of the cloud, This is my welbeloued son in whom I am well pleased, Heare him.

It is an earnest Sermon surely, which the maiestie of God himselfe preacheth out of his moste high pulpit, heauen, and out of his owne priuie chamber, yea and that of the greatest matters of all, and matters of moste weighty importance. For in these few words

he exhibiteth vnto the whole worlde (according to his former promise) their Messias, and bewtifieth hym with most high commendation. First hee describeth his person and dignitie, and sayth. This is my sonne, not by adoption, as we are all made by Christ as many as beleeue in him: but the onely begotten sonne, coeternall and consubstantiall with the father, which nowe by the woonderfull counsaile and worke of God being vnited with mans nature, is in these wordes presented. Then hee giueth warning what his office is, and sayth, wee must giue him audience. Therefore he hath to declare vnto men from the decreed ordinance of Gods maiesty: that is, it cannot be chosen, but he must needs haue the office of a teacher. And therewithall the heauenly commaundement is enclosed: Heare him, by the which all folkes throughout the whole worlde are bounden to giue audience to this one persons word, and to none but his. For hee onely hath commission to proclayme and declare the secretes of God. And of what matters hee preached, the Sermons that the Euangelistes haue enrolled, make playne mention: that is to say, of the true knowledge of God (as pertaining to his his essence and will) of sinne, of rightcousnesse, of the resurrection, of life, of the spiri-

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tuall and euerlasting kingdome of Christ, of true calling vppon God, and other seruices due vnto God. Hereunto pertaine the saying, Psal. 2. he hath ordained me a king vppon his holy hill of Sion, and I shal preach his commaundement. Also: kisse the sonne, leest the Lord be angry, and you perish from the right way. And concerning the Apostles, Christ sayth: He that heareth you, heareth me. For he sent them foorth into all the world, not to spread abroad newe opinions imagined of their owne brayne, but to be notable and perpatuall witnesses of the doctrine and merite of Christ, hee installeth them therefore with this authoritie for certainties sake, and willeth all men to heare them, as well as if hee himselfe spake the same words out of heauen that the Apostles do in their ministery. And therefore hee sayth in another place. It is not you that speake, but the spirite of God which is in you, And for that cause also those preachers take vppon them the name of Apostles, and say plainly they are the seruauntes of Christ. Paul was so bold therby as to say: If any man preach anie other Gospell vnto you, than we haue done cursed be he, and God hath oftentimes with many most greeuous sore slaughters reuenged the contemning of his worde and the falling vnto the heathenish

opinions, which the Prophets call by a verie filthy foule terme, whoredome.

Hereby therefore it is euident, that al men are straightly bounden by the commaundement of God, to heare that doctrine which God hath manifestly declared by his owne worde, and hath put it into certaine persons mouthes hauing singular testimonies of God (and by them hath enrolled it into certaine monumentes of recorde, that is, into the prophetes and apostles writinges, and hath sealed it vp with great myracles) and according to that doctrine and none other to acknowledge and serue God.

Therefore it is cleerer then the sun light at noone dayes, that a man may not lawfully doubt in this doctrine, nor be a Neuter.

Then it followeth consequently, that all those are too too farre wide from the trueth, which fall from this doctrine, and eyther imagine an other themselues, or els followe some other that is alreadie deuised to their handes. Esay sayth: hee that speaketh not according to this word, shall not haue the morninges light.

The second reason is. There be two contradictions (that is to say, two doctrines the one cleane contrary to the other) which cannot

not possiblie be brought to a concord, by anie art, either of any angel, man, or deuill: the word of God and mens doctrines, whether they were hatched vp within the Church or without the Church, and whosoeuer was the author of them, whether Mahomet or Pope, Bishop or King. For it is a sure vnfallible principle: There is but one trueth, and more then one trueth there cannot be.

Then whatsoeuer varyeth from that one, must needes be no trueth. For trueth agreeth with trueth. Now than, the word of God is onely one agreeing with it selfe, euerlasting, proclaymed by Christ out of the eternall fathers bosome, and conteined in the bookes of the Prophets and Apostles.

Gods word and mans doctrine.

Contrariwise the doctrines of men are variable, & swarue too too farre from the onely worde of God, and differ among themselues more then colde and heate. Take example onely at the papistes doctrine, and conferre the sincere worde of God with it. The papistes teach that men are able in this life to satisfie the law of God. This is their vnmoueable principle, and then out of it they drawe and set vp what they lust themselues. Contrariwise, the worde of GOD affirmeth, that men are not able to satisfie the lawe of God. And what is the let? marry sir,

Marke the difference betweene Gods word, and the Papistes doctrine.

the poyson of sinne, which remayneth yet still euen in them that be borne a newe, so that it infecteth and marreth euen those woorkes that be most excellent. This proposition is also confirmed by the greatest workes of all other, by the sending of Christ into the world, and by his passion, resurrection, and ascention. For if man be able to fulfil the law, Christ died in vayne, and all his benefites are of none effect. But that is not possible.

The papistes striue with hand and foote (as they say) that the perfect fulfilling of the lawe is our owne doing. But the worde of God sheweth contrary, that the perfite fulling of the lawe is not our deed but Christes, which wee receiue by imputation (that is, by free pardon) through fayth. Christ is the end of the lawe to iustifie all that beleeue. Rom. 10. The papistes say, that man is partly iustified, and pleaseth God, and made inheritour of eternall life by the merite of Christ, freely, as pertaining to his first acceptation and partly by charitie to make vp the matter, that is to say, that man is iustified, made perfitly righteous, & getteth eternal life by his own deedes doing. Contrariwise the word of God affirmeth that man is at the beginning and ending, first and last iustified, accepted, pleased GOD, and made inheritour

ritour of eternall blessednesse by the onely merite of Christ, which is applied by fayth, freely without workes eyther going before or comming after. God loued the worlde so, that he gaue his onely begotten son, that all that beleeue in him shoulde not perish, but haue life euerlasting *Iohn.3.* The Papists cry out, that good workes are meritorious vnto saluation. Contrariwise the word of God pareth awaie all occasion of boasting from vs, and reporteth openly, that mans workes are not meritorious vnto saluation. For the onely worke of Christ is meritorious in this case, so as it is sufficient for all that beleeue. Hebr.10. The Papistes teache, that wee must stand womanly in a doubt, whether wee be certainly forgiuen of our sinnes, or whether we be in the state of grace, and please God or not, and so continue still to our dying day. Contrariwise the worde of GOD requireth a direct playne fayth, and an vndoubted trust that euery one resolue with himselfe so certainly that hee is presently pardoned of his sinnes for Christes sake, as hee is sure that hee heareth the worde of God, which is the power of God to saue all that beleeue. Rom.1. And as surely as hee heareth the absolution with his eares, and as certainly as hee receaueth in the Lordes

supper

supper the most excellent pledge of this matter, euen the sacrament of Christes bodie and bloude, and so is hee truely vnited with Christ.

The papists do prate as if they were mad, that wee must not onely pray vnto God, but also vnto Saints, though not as helpers (lo how new religion hath combred them now:) yet at least as intercessors and petitioners. Contrariwise the word of God requireth that the honour of inuocation & prayer be done to none but to God alone. Thou shalt honour the Lord thy God, and him onely shalt thou serue. *Deut. 6.* The Papistes cast vp the nose into the winde and crake, that the Church is tyed to the Bishop of Rome and his Colledge. Contrariwise the worde of God bindeth the Church neither to person, place, nor time, but sayth, where two or three be gathered togither in my name, I wil be in the midst among them. Also, My sheepe shall heare my voyce. Item, I haue perceiued for a trueth, that God is no acceptour of persons, but that in all kindes of people, whosoeuer feareth him, & worketh righteousnesse, is accepted of him.

The papistes teach that the Lordes supper is a sacrifice, that is, an oblation to purchase remission of sinnes withall, both to them

selues and to others not onely the quicke but also to the dead: and that the one part of it must be caried about to be gazed at and worshipped and yet not to be receiued. And the other part nipped away quite from the lay people. Contrariwise the word of God affirmeth, that the Lordes supper is not a sacrifice, wherwith we make sacrifice to God, but a most excellent benefit, that God maketh vs partakers of, and is auailable vnto vs, not by gazing at, but by the vse and partaking of it: as the words sound, Take, eat: Take, drink: and ý it is a cruel sacrilege to take away the cup, where nevertheleſſe by Gods appointment it is expressed in the very wordes of the institution: to be common to al: drinke ye all of this (saith Christ:) And seeing the bloud of Christ was shed aswell for the lay people as for the ministers of the word: that kind which ought to put men in remembrance of Christs bloudshed, may not be denied to no state of men by anie right, or by anie honest pretence.

These and such like poyntes of doctrines (which all to reckon vp were to long) are far more contrary one to another, and can bee much lesse brought to agree togither, then fire and yce, drought and moysture, seeing they be extremities and placed in the vtter-

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most steppe: and no midde way can bee possible found. For the authours themselues are one contrarie to the other: and the matters themselues are one contrarie to another. The one part hath Gods worde, the other hath mans worde, which albeit now and than (to cast a myst before the eies of the vnlearned) cloke their errours with some textes of Scripture, yet they doe it with extreame iniurie and reproche of the worde of God. Besides that, thou hast the vnchaungeable worde of God. If anie man preach anie other Gospell than that you haue receiued, cursed be he. Therefore a man may not lawfully be a Neuter in this behalfe. Eeither heare the word of God and beleue it stedfastly, or follow the lying gloses of men, and hurle away the word of God. If thou beleeuest that thou art accepted vnto grace through Christ, then thou must needs giue ouer trusting in thy works: but if thou seeke to be iustified by thy workes, thou canst not choose but cast away Christ.

And seeing it is euen so, what a madnesse, nay what a mad woodenesse is it for a man to busie himselfe so much to bring these contradictions to agreement: what a presumptuous and witlesse Bedlam bryned part is it for vs to iomble those thinges that seeme agreeable vnto our reason with the high

mistery

misterie of God, and so to make an horrible euill fauoured mingle mangle: God hath declared his plaine certaine sure worde from heauen, confirmed it with myracles, and bounden all people vnto that worde by hys earnest commaundement: and yet we goe about to mingle our owne dreames, nay our dregges that stucke in our drousie blinde reason, with the most bright sunne, and to reform the eternall and vnspeakeable wisedome of him that made all thinges. Alas men, alas mens maners.

The third reason is like vnto this that went before, that there is but one onely doctrine, that quieteth the conscience & bringeth righteousnesse and eternall life. And that doctrine is the onely worde of Christ, which he set foorth first in paradise, then afterward by the prophetes, thirdly by himselfe when he was made man according to the prophetes sayinges: fourthly by the Apostles and their successours and disciples. And the summe of that doctrine is this: The womans seed shall breake the serpentes head. Gen. 3. In this saying consisteth all the whole old testament. And in the newe testament the same sentence is rehearsed and expressed more cleerely: God so loued the worlde, that hee gaue hys onely begotten sonne, that all that beleeue

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in him should not perish, but haue life euerlasting. *Iohn 3.* And this sentence is expounded by all the whole new Testament. And as for all other doctrines howe gay and howe pleasant soeuer they seeme, spring out of nothing else but out of the lawe, as out of the onely and most plentious fountaine: Therefore like as the law (as the Scripture reporteth) doth worke wrath, and can none otherwise doo (for all the whole nature of man is sinfull and guiltie) euen so do all other doctrines nothing els, but feare, wound, kill, and damne the conscience. Whereof it is playne, that they are no wholesom doctrines for vs in any wise to haue forgiueneſſe of our sins and eternall life by. Nowe let vs at few wordes trie out the papistes doctrine and ours in the principall Article of all, and see which of them a mans conscience may the better and more surely bee quieted in. For surely that doctrine cannot faile but be most neere vnto the trueth, that a mans conscience can feele perfit rest and ioy in. For the truth was declared from heaue̅ for this cause, or els it had not needed y God should haue reuealed any thing. For all such geare as causeth wauering of minde, spring vp fast inough in our owne heartes without any outward trauaile. Our aduersaries nowe for a great many of

yeeres

peeres teach with wondering and scolding, yea rather with sword, fire, water, and plentie of Martyrs bloud. That man is able to accomplishe the obedience of the lawe, and consequently be iustified by hys owne workes.

This were although it bee lapped vp in certaine cloudie toyes, because the vnlearned should not knowe their falshood, yet theyr doctrine reacheth no further doubtlesse. For that which they feine of a certaine grace that commeth of themselues, and put a difference betweene redemption it selfe and iustification or receiuing of a sinner, is nothing else but very iugling-cattes to florish out theyr lyes withall. First weigh the originall fountaine of that doctrine where they say, we are iustified by our workes eyther alone without the merite of Christ, or by our works and the merite of Christ togither, as those teache that are the wilier pies. Are not these seedes of the lawe? yea in deed are they. For the lawe preacheth of workes, and promiseth iustification and life for workes sake. And doth not reason, which GOD hath engraffed part of the lawe in, to tell the same tale? For naturally wee thinke, that God accepteth all well doers, and hateth euill doers. But nowe peep not at ỳ law as it were through a creuise

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of a windowe nor superficially, but pluce away Moses vayle and looke vpon his bright shining face, that is, looke into the heart of the lawe. For heereof commeth all the error, in that our Pharisees and Justiciaries doe clappe a fowle thicke vayle vpon Moses face, and see nothing els commaunded in the lawe but outward discipline, which because it may be done in some sorte, straight-wayes they flosh vp all the whole ten commandements at one suppe, and prate like fine doctors, that they are able to fulfill the ten commaundementes, yea to vtter themselues more plainly in their colour, they faine workes of supererogation, and imagine a certaine perfection aboue the lawe, that is more then needeth. This is vggly palpable darknesse, whereon verie manie before our daies caught hold, and verie manie yet still set much store by it. But Christ leadeth vs into the bowels of the law, where he sayth: Loue the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soule, and with all thy minde, and loue thy neighbour as thy selfe. *Mat.* 22. *Deut.* 6. And Paule sayth: The law is spirituall. Rom. 7 Lo, heere is required not onely outward obedience but inward obedience also, and that most perfet full obedience in all pointes, to the vttermost of all the possible powers that man

Nay of superabomination.

that man hath: so that if there be any thing in mans life, (though it be neuer so little) that is contrary to the law of God, it maketh a man guiltie of the lawe, and bringeth the paine of the lawe. Yea all the holy Scripture doth most chiefly of all reproue and condemne the inward sinnes, as ignorance of God, distrust, doubtfulnesse, securitie, concupiscence, enuie, hate, and all the scourging sea of motions, repugnant against the will of God, whereof mans heart is alwaies brinke full. For when the obedience of the lawe is talked of aright, it is not meant of certaine vertues, which mens eyes are blinded withall, but of all the whole obedience both inward and outward, that may consist and is able to stand in the iudgement of God. For God doth not (like a temporall iudge) giue iudgement vpon outward causes only, but he searcheth the hearts and the reines, and will haue the whole nature of man with all his members, yea euen the slenderest members of all bent wholly to serue him. And in his most iust displeasure, he curseth and damneth al that do not declare the praise of both inward and outward obedience. For the iudgement is both vnmoueable, and lasteth for euer: Cursed is euery one that continueth not in al things, that are written in the booke of the law to do them in

deed. *Deut.*27. Now therefore let vs enter through this open sentence pronounced by the mouth of Christ and his messengers, whō hee put peculiarly a part to minister his word vnto the priuie chamber of the law, and let vs looke stedfastly vpon Moses face, and search our selues whether we be such inwardly and outwardly as the lawe requireth vs to be. Therefore remember thy selfe, whether thou haue so cleere knowledge of GOD in thy heart, that no darkenesse remayneth in it. Doth it not seeme vnto thee nowe and then an absurditie and a thing not possible, that God should be three in persons and one in substance? Doth not thy heart stand in doubt now and then of the good will of GOD towardes thee, and thinkest that God regardeth not thee as hee doth other folkes? Doest thou not thinke sometime, that thou art destitute of all mans helpe, and therefore thou shalt be the most miserable of all men. Wouldest thou not be fainer many times or rather alwaies to haue worldly meanes which thou seest presently with thine eyes to trust vnto, and hold thee vp by them as with a staffe, then to giue ouer thy self altogither to the decreed pleasure and gouernance of God, especially in such cases as reason seeth no sure hauen to rest in, nor can finde any thing to settle it selfe

vpon?

vpon? Doth not this narrow straite thought wamble often in thy minde to and fro: Alas, I am a sinner, thus and thus I haue offended, who can tell, whether God will haue me or not, seeing he is righteous, and abhorreth sinners? Doest thou not thinke when thou art vexed with troubles, miseries, or sickenesse, that it is a token of Gods wrath? Doest thou not grant, & wouldest rather that God should loue other after that fashion more than thee? Doest thou neuer feele in thine heart anie sparks of anger at least, if not the whole flame of lustes, and euen most extreame readinesse vnto euill? Finally doest thou liue so all the dayes of thy life, that thou offendest no bodie in gesture, word nor deede, & that thou seekest to do other men good as diligently and willingly as to thy selfe? Doest thou ouerhip nothing in the workes of thy vocation? Verily if thou haue hit this pricke so streight, ẏ thou mayst truly make thy boast of these matters, there is no doubt, but thou art worthy to bee crowned with the good wil of God, and euerlasting life as a most worthily won best game. But I would see but euē one man stand out since the fal of Adam (Christ except which is not onely man, but also very God) ẏ can truly say thus of himself, or deserueth this commendatiō. Doutles if there were but one such

a one, all the whole scripture must needes be false. I speake a great worde, but it is vndoubtedly true. Aduise thy selfe wel therfore, as I haue bidden thee, and examine thine owne heart, will and minde, if thou canst be perswaded thus of thy selfe: out of doubt thou shalt bee faine to confesse, that there is more euill in all thy whole bodie than good: that blindnesse in thy minde, that an euil fauoured readinesse and lust in thy wil to do those things that are contrary vnto God, and a tombling of affections in thine heart to beare rule, and swarue in by heapes. No, the outward conuersation cannot possibly hit the prick of perfection that it ought to do. This all that are in their right wit, cannot choose but confesse with their owne mouth. As for those that are bewitched, it maketh small force, what they scolde against it. But if thou haue small trust to thy selfe, at least way heare the reportes that Gods booke maketh, which vnlesse thou be robbed of thy wit, thou canst not choose but grant vnto. The imaginations & thoughts of mans heart, are bent vnto euill euen from his youth. *Gen. viii.* Mans heart is froward and vnsearchable. *Ierem.* 17. Behold I was cénceiued in wickednesse, and in sinnes my mother bare me. *Psal.* 51. We are by nature the children of wrath, as other

ther are, *Ephes.* 2. We are all such when we come out of our mothers wombe into this world, that all the whole lumpe of our substance is infected with originall poyson, and become guiltie before God so sore, that except we be regenerate and borne a newe of water and of the holy Ghost (as Christ teacheth) We cannot enter into the kingdome of God. *Iohn* 3. But thou wilt say, these sentences be spoken of them ý be not regenerat. But those which are borne a new, may satisfie the law of God at ful. For they be new creatures in whome the holy Ghost hath his dwelling place, & begetteth and stirreth vp newe motions in thē. Harken therfore, what the word of God which cannot lie, sayth of them also. Lord if thou wouldest looke straitly vpon wickednesses, Lord who could abide it. *Psal.* 129. Enter not into iudgement with thy seruant, for in thy sight no man liuing shalbe iustified. *Psal.* 143. O immortall God, what a thunderclap is this? All (sayth he) are guiltie before God, not onely for the corrupt sinfull nature, which they bring from their mothers womb into this world, but for the innumerable sins which they haue defiled their life withall, contrary to the will of God, so sore that no bodie coulde euer stand forth before the face of God, if man should be iudged

after his owne workes. All (quoth he) are sliden backe, all are become vnprofitable, there is none that doth good, no not one. *Psalm* 14. Christ teacheth all to pray after one sorte: And forgiue vs our trespasses. *Mat.* 6. The wrath of God is reuealed from heauen vpon al wickednesse and vnrighteousnesse of men, *Rom.* 1. And, There is no difference, all haue sinned, and want the glorie which they ought to haue before God. *Rom.* 3. God hath shut vp al vnder vnbeleefe. *Rom.* 11. Howe wilt thou winde thy selfe then out of this number of all, except thou proue the word of God a lyer? If we say we haue no sinne, wee deceiue our selues, and there is no trueth in vs. *Iohn* 5. Therefore thou hast thine own nature a witnesse which if thou looke throughly into it, proueth thee a flat sinner. Then thou hast the word of GOD, which affirmeth the same: Therefore thou art not able to fulfil the law. For a sinner thou art, and a sinner thou remainest, as long as thou liuest in thy mortal body. The hyre of sinne (sayth Paul) is death. And therefore death that deuoureth all men: yea euery one, euen the moste holyest, is a great and a graue witnesse, that all are sinners, and that none accomplisheth the law of God. For if there could any one be found in all the wide

world,

world, that fulfilled the law perfitly, death by right could haue nothing ado with him. But none euer scaped the handes of death, nor neuer shall doe, while the worlde goeth about. Therefore all haue beene and are vnder the curse of the lawe As for the doctrine in other places of fulfilling of the law, which the godly do, it must be vnderstanded of imputation and inchoation, or beginning as I haue told you before. Therefore seeing this is a plaine matter, it followeth moste cleerely, that no man can content God nor be forgiuen of his sinnes by his owne deeds doing. For God (as it is to be spoken and spoken agayn) is not satisfied as man is, with an outward obedience, howe good soeuer it be, but hee requireth an integritie and most absolute perfection in all the powers of man. And seeing hee findeth not that, hee doth according to the sentence of the lawe and his eternall iustice pronounce all damned, as pertaining to their owne workes.

Now therefore take heede and aduise thee well, whether thy conscience, when thou art at the poynt of death, at such time as thy sinne which hath lyen long at thy doores, and taken quiet rest, bee truely awaked in deede, so as thou perceiuest after a certaine maner the vgglinesse and greatnesse of it, that

wrath of God, and they deserued damnation, can quiet it selfe in the obedience that thou hast done vnto the law: How shalt thou be certified in thine heart, that thy merites are other folkes merites, eyther doe counterpeise thy sinnes, or that the worthinesse and excellencie of them bee weightier than thy sinnes are: This is an hard matter, and there can no conscience quiet it selfe therein. For this doubt shall alwayes runne in thy minde: Alas, who can tell howe I shall stand before GOD, perchance my sinnes are mo, and more haynous, then I am able to counterwayle with the merite of my workes: This same wrangling and wresting is a testimonie of a weake and a wauering conscience, yea rather of a conscience that despaireth of his owne merits. But the sentence is giuen: He that beleueth not in the sonne, hath not eternall life, but the wrath of God abideth vpon him. *Ioh.* 3. And, whatsoeuer is not of faith, is sin. *Rom.* 14. These doubters therefore if they continue so still, get no eternal life. For a man must beleeue stedfastly while he liueth in this world, & haue a tast of the grace of God and eternall life in hymself. This case is out of al peradventure, if it coulde be indifferently acknowledged. But our brainlike and wicklesse bewitched aduersa-

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ries damne the thinges that they know not, as for these exercises and wranglings of conscience, they knowe eyther nothing or very litle of them. Now on the contrary part consider the doctrine which our Churches professe and teache, and search out the matter diligently, whether the conscience may finde rest and ioy to settle it selfe in it. Our doctrine is, that all are sinners by nature, and that the remnant of sinnes, the filth of originall poyson, and a froward inclination, abide still euen in them that are regenerate or iustified: so that albeit a certayne obedience towards the law be begun in the beleeuers thorough the holy Ghost, yet it is but begunne onely in this life, and not so perfit as it ought to be. The beleeuers fulfill the law by imputation through Christ, that is, are iustified or forgiuen their sinnes, made righteous, haue eternall life and the holy Ghost, and bee made heyres of the kingdome of heauen, not by any merits of their owne, eyther going before or comming after regeneration, but freely for the onely merite of Christ, which is applyed by fayth as the instrument to receiue it by. I haue alreadie proued, that no man fulfilleth the law of God. For although there be a certain difference between hethē peoples works and christian folks workes, yet when the com-

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munication of mans allowance vnto life euerlasting before God, the workes euen of the moste holy are nothing but doong, as Paule termeth them, much lesse are they meritorious. If Abraham (saith *Paul*) were iustified by the works of the law, he hath to boast of, but not with God. *Rom.* 4. What could be spoken more apparantly, that all that this noble worthy man Abraham hath to boast of his most excellent workes, is with men, and hath no place in the worke of iustification before God: that is to say, he deserued not to be accepted with God through his owne holinesse. But that we are iustified freely before God and obteine saluation, righteousnesse, and eternall life onely by fayth in Christ, without respect of our owne worthinesse, it is moste euidently declared by the testimonies both of the old testament and new, and by the examples of all iustified men. Abraham beleeued God, and it was compted vnto him for righteousnesse. *Gen.* 15.

¶ Doest thou heare the moste auncient record howe the moste high Patriarke was iustified? Doubtlesse by imputation, that is, by free pardon onely. And howe? Marry in that hee layd holde on the Messias by fayth, and was at a full perfit poynt with himselfe that he was in the state of grace and shoulde

be inheritour of euerlasting life according to the promises by the free benefite of the Messias, although hee were vnworthy for the manifolde spottes of sinne that hee had. And this worde imputation or free pardon is added vpon diligent foresight. The cruell murthering theefe, in case the Magistrate set him at libertie, hath this benefite freely by pardon. And so Abraham was made righteous by free pardon. For he was guiltie before God both for his inward and outward sinnes, no lesse then the theefe was that had committed many bloudie murthers. And therefore Esay speaketh moste comfortably according to my saying in his first chapter. If your sinnes were like scarlet, they shalbe whiter than snow, and if they were red as purple, they shall be as white woll. So, Blessed are they whose wickednesse are forgiuen, and whose sinnes are couered. Blessed is the man vnto whome the Lord hath not imputed sin. *Psal.* 31. He calleth none blessed: but them whose sins be couered. Then he pronounceth not thē blessed that deserue iustification by their own deeds, but vnto whome it is freely giuen. Christ accepteth sinners freely, & preacheth forgiuenes of sinnes vnto them, and affirmeth in plaine wordes, ý he came not to call the righteous, but

sinners

finners vnto repentance. *Matt.9.* Come to me al you that labour and are laden, and I ſhall refreſh you. *Mat.11.* This is the will of him that ſent me, that all that ſee the ſon, and beleeue on him, haue euerlaſting life. *Iohn.6.* There is none other name vnder heauen giuen vnto men, wherein we muſt be ſaued. *Actes 4.* And, vnto him all the Prophetes beare record, that all receiue remiſsion of their ſinnes that beleeue in him. *Acts 10.* And Paul knitteth vp the ſum of this matter moſt cleerly in his propoſition, But nowe (ſayth he) the righteouſneſſe of God is manifeſtly ſhewed without the lawe, hauing witneſſe of the lawe and the Prophetes. And the righteouſneſſe commeth by the faith of Ieſus Chriſt, vnto all and vpon all that beleeue in him. *Rom.3.* And by and by followeth a very elegant declaration: For hee had already ſpoken paſt mans reaſon. For there is no difference (ſayth he) all haue ſinned and want ẏ glorie of God, and are iuſtified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Chriſt Ieſus, whom God hath made a mercie ſeate, by faith in his bloud. And in the ſame chapter he beateth in this ſumme the third time: we iudge, or wee certainly determine ỹ man is iuſtified by fayth without the workes of the lawe.

What can any man speake more plainly? For he putteth a difference betweene Gods righteousnesse and mans, and saith that the righteousnesse of God is manifestly shewed without the law, and yet hath witnesse in Moses and the Prophetes, and that it commeth freely vnto all that beleeue in Christ. Heere thou hearest workes plainly put away and shut out of doores, as pertaining to the obteyning of the iustice of God, which is of value before God. For there is a righteousnesse without the law, which commeth freely. By grace you are saued through faith, & not of your selues: for it is the gift of God and not of works, least any man should boast. *Ephes.* 2. All boasting (as thou hearest) is quite taken away from vs. But what neede wee to make long heaping together of so many testimonies, seeing the whole Scripture consisteth in this one point, and none can be ignorant of this sentence, except he wil be wilfully and stubbornly blind for the nonce, specially forasmuch as it is cleerely set foorth nowe these many yeares in writing by the greatest learned and most profound wise men, so that no man may henceforth pretend anie more ignorance. With this doctrine all examples of all ages doe accord. Looke vpon Adam, and Abraham, Peter and Paule, they

were

were all iustified by one and the selfe same meanes, and none otherwise than the theefe that was hanged on the crosse, that is to say freely without respect of their owne merites, for the slayne sacrifice Christes sake. So Iohn Baptist sayth: that Christ is the lambe which taketh away the sinnes of the world. In which worde (world) he includeth both himselfe and Mary the virgin and all.

Lay this geare nowe to thy conscience that trembleth and quaketh when it acknowledgeth his sinnes, and beholdeth the wrath of God, and proue whether it can quiet it self here, and perceiue any gladnesse, and feele the grace of God towardes it selfe, and euerlasting life, or not. It is out of all peraduenture that the conscience is in greater distresse, when it beholdeth his owne sinnes, the wrath of God, and eternall damnation, and when death assaulteth nature most bitterly and vehemently, and hath no longer hope of life, than at other times when hee is in bodily health, and when he thinketh death to be most farre of.

In this behalfe the minde compareth these two together, himselfe and his sinnes on the one part, and of the iudgement of God, and the wrathe of God against sinnes,

and

and eternall damnation on that other part. And first he seeketh counsell & help naturallie at himselfe. But no mans conscience (as I sayde before) is able certainly to determine, that his merits are greater and worthier thē his sins, so that for the worthinesse of hys own workes sake, God remitteth his wrath, taketh away the pain, and giueth righteoulnes. For the conscience shall first of all crie still, that his sinnes are many mo, and much greater then his good workes. The word of God will also say nay. No man liuing shalbe iustified in thy sight. Also, Lord if thou wouldest looke straitly vpon sinnes, who should abide it? And, when you haue done al that you are bounden to doe, say, we are vnprofitable seruants, we haue done but our duties. Then when hee findeth no ease in himselfe to hold vp the quaking conscience withall: he must needes looke about him to others besides himselfe whether he can haue any sure hope of saluation there or not. But when hee hath all done, hee shall be able to finde rest of conseience in no man either quicke or dead, nor in anie merites eyther of Monke, Chanon, Fryer, or Nunne: neyther in Masse nor Pilgrimage, nor any thing els that man can doe. And why so? Because these matters want the worde of GOD, yea the

worde of God forbiddeth a man to put any confidence in creatures. Furthermore I beseech thee, how shal the conscience be certified of any creatures worke, that there is so much worthinesse and vertue in it, that it purgeth and wipeth away sinnes, and meeteth euerlasting life, not vnto one person onely, but also to many one mo. In deede the fatte fedde Moonks and vagobond Fryers haue verie liberally solde their merites vnto people lying on their death bed, but tell me, whose conscience could be perswaded, that his sinnes be forgiuen for their sakes? Nay, it was brought and confirmed further in doubt, as a most sorrowfull example of these many yeeres beare record inough and too much, alas therefore. What shift then shall the trembling conscience make to finde rest? There is no shift will serue but this onely one, when it shall flie vnto Christ as the sure shot anker, and shall call his benefites to mind, wherefore he was made man, why hee was made a ransome, and a slayne sacrifice for all the whole world, and what was the cause that hee cancelled the handwriting of the lawe, conquered the Diuell and death, and made open free passage vnto euerlasting life, and shall after that consider the promises and commaundementes, wherein all men are bidden to

beleeue

beleeue in Christ, and vndoubted forgiueness is promised to all sinners through Christ: at length by the helpe of the holy Ghost, whome he shall craue of God by Christ, hee shall apply this merite vnto himselfe by fayth, and be fully perswaded that his sinnes are despatched and swallowed vp in the death of Christ and that hee is in the state of grace and made righteous for Christes sake without anie merite or worthinesse of his owne. Then the conscience shalbe able to stretch vp it self and be most certainly perswaded of the grace and fauour of God towardes it, and of saluation, righteousnesse, and euerlasting life: neither shall it be afrayd to looke God in the face, nor of death: and it shall haue an vndoubted hope of euerlasting goodnesse. And what is the cause thereof? Marry that matter hath the expresse and playne word of God to warrant it. For thus sayth Christ, This is the will of him that sent me, that all that see the son, and beleeue in him, haue euerlasting life. *Iohn.6.* Therefore was the promise made through faith, that it might come of fauour whereby the promise might bee sure. *Rom.4.* Also, Where sin did abound, there grace was more aboundant. *Rom.5.* Also, Christ is made of God vnto vs wisedome, righteousnesse, sanctification and

redemption, that as it is written, he that reioyceth should reioyce in the Lord. The conscience may safely leane to those texts that haue the manifest promise of God. Besides that, he that al trust and hope is put in, is sufficient inough, so that a man may not doubt in his minde, of his worthinesse, merite, and power. All creatures are iudged of the conscience, and are ouer feeble to repulse and put to flight so great a lumpe of sinnes, so sore a prouoking of Gods wrath against vs, and so horrible a furour and outrage of our moste mightie enemies. But forasmuch as Christ is God almighty and very man perfit without sinne, and seeing Gods booke beareth record that hee was sent and geuen vnto vs, to be a mediatour, and intercessour, and a sauiour, and thereunto signes be added, euen the sacraments that Christ himselfe instituted, the elemences whereof runne into our very senses: Therefore the conscience may surely atteine peace, tranquilitie, myrth and and eternall life in this selfe same Christ, and cast out of his heart all that breedeth eyther doubt or desperation. This is plenteously declared by examples both olde and new, which I coulde recken vp, but that it would require to long a time.

But would to God this geare were somewhat

what more timely pondred of many a one, which are endewed and bewitched with wicked opinions, and giue themſelues al to careleſſe ſecuritie, & neither iudge nor ſpeake of theſe ſo weighty matters any otherwiſe, than (as the old ſaid ſaw is) blinde men deeme of colours. For when mens conſciences ſhalbe toſſed and turmoiled in the time of anguiſh with the terrours of ſinnes, of the wrathe of God, of death, and of hell, then they ſhall beginne (all too late) to common of theſe matters, and it is danger leaſt they end their life in deſperation and grudging againſt God, as it hath chaunced to many men of famous eſtate in our dayes. Therefore this ſame neceſſitie ought to moue vs, that wee ſhoulde thinke no Neutralitie, or playing Iacke of both ſides is allowed in this behalfe. For in thy laſt houre when thou muſt flit out of this life (at leaſt if thou beleeueſt that there is another life after, as many one ſcarſe thinketh there is) wherein ſhall thy conſcience burthen thee? Thou waſt a Neuter, but nowe thy conſcience requireth thee to be at a full certaintie, wherein thou mayeſt take thy leaue with this worlde: Out of peradventure the diuel wil not ſuffer thee to be a Neuter. And when thy breath is once out of thy mouth, thou ſhalt not remain a Neuter, thou

shall not hang in the mid way betweene heauen and earth, but eyther hell or heauen shall catch thee, and betweene these two there is no midde way left. For as touching the doctrine of Purgatorie, is nothing els but a very false fained fantasie. And this I can assure thee of, and tell thee beforehand by plaine tokens, that thou shalt not bee snatched vp into heauen. Why? because thou beleeuedst not Christes worde. The sentence is alreadie giuen: He that beleeueth not is already iudged, because hee beleeueth not in the name of the onely begotten Sonne of God. *Iohn.* 3. For God pulled no man into heauen against his wil nor by the hayre of the head, as they say. He offereth his word, he calleth, he moueth the heart by the holy Ghost. Now if thy heart be so hard and so stonie, that it will not be moued, but repyneth and stubburnly wrastleth against the worke of God, hee also forsaketh and damneth thee, according to this text: Hee that setteth not by me, I will also set naught by him. 1. *Reg.* 2. Where wilt thou become then, when God hath turned thee out? I will tel thee, hel that hath gaped a great while for thee with open mouth shall slothe the vp for his owne pray.

Finally I will speake of one notable plain saying of Christ, which in my iudgement forbiddeth

biddeth all Neutralitie. Thus sayth Christ, He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad, *Luke* 11. This thunderclap nippeth, knocketh downe, and all to clattereth all Neuters. But make mee not a tush at this preacher: It is God himselfe and thy sauiour (I would thou knewest it) which was sent from the eternall Fathers bosome to this office, to the intent hee should declare the mysteries of God vnto vs. He (I tell thee) doth plainly establish this commaundement, that all should tie themselues vnto hym, and diuorceth all from him, and pronounceth them his foes, that refuse so to do. He will haue all to bee with him, that is, hee requireth the whole man to be ioyned and coupled vnto him. Howe? According to the commaundement that GOD proclaymed in the clouds concerning this sonne. This is my welbeloued sonne, heare him. He willeth all men of all nations and al ages to receiue his word and none other, and to acknowledge and take it both for the heauenly and onely trueth. All religions, sacraments, doctrines, and Godseruice that differ from him and his worde hee willeth to haue discerned, hurled away, and dauned. For like as God is but onelie one, euen so is his manifest worde but onely

one & a simple playn one, and not variable nor manifold. He also requireth that all we be of one vnitie in faith, wherwith we must nedds be grafted vnto him and none other. For hee alone is ordained and appointed the intercessour, mediatour, and sauiour of the world: By him alone (and none but him) saluation came to the world, he alone is the Lamb appoynted to the slaughter, that taketh away the sinnes of the worlde. Therefore we must fasten our fayth vpon this Christ, that by him we may be made righteous, ẏ we may clime vp with him vnto the heauenly father and to the mansions of euerlasting life, As he sayth: No man cōmeth vnto the father but by me. *Ioh.* 14. He that beleueth in the sonne hath euerlasting life. *Ioh.* 3. We leare the same by the sacramentes also, that it is of necessitie that we be ioyned, coupled and knit to this Christ and to none other, to the intent we may be born a new, and made fellow heyres of eternall glorie. For in Baptisme wee are washed in the bloud of Christ from our sins, and accompted and regestred into the number of the citizens of heauen, Yea wee are chosen to be the children of God. In the Lordes supper we receiue all the whole benefite of Christ by faith, and are knit vnto Christ bodily. For we thorow fayth and the holy ghost eat & drinke the

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very body & bloud of Christ, that we also may be partakers of his diuine and immortall nature, and go with him where he now liueth and haue the fruition of the same life, blessednes & glory, that he hath. For this cause we are disseuered from all creatures, and incorporated vnto Christ alone by faith and the sacramẽts, and those ẏ counsail, teach or do to the contrary, cannot chose but erre most filthily, and put Christ and his sacramentes to the highest reproch that may be. As those that set Christ aside and put their confidence in creatures, in men, or in mens workes, do teare themselues away from Christ, as if the foote or the hand should cut thẽselues off, from their own body.

Thirdly Christ requireth vs to pray all after one sorte with him, that he being our onely Bishop, Mediatour, and intercessour, wee may prease boldly vnto the throne of grace. And for that cause hee biddeth vs powre our praiers vnto God the father only in his name. Verily verily I say vnto you, whatsoeuer you shal aske the father in my name, hee shall giue it you. *Iohn*, 16. As for all other helpe fellowes, peticioners, or helpers, he thrusteth them out by the shoulders with this one worde, in that he will haue vs pray in hys name. Therefore they that seeke after other guides and spokesmen before GOD to cleaue vnto in

their praier, fall from Christ, and despise the decreed will of the father in this Mediatour whome he hath giuen vs. Fourthly Christ requireth an vnitie in confessing of the trueth, that we both confesse him (and none other) in our doctrine, and beleeue out of al doubt, that he onely shalbe the Emanuel which shal wipe away and mitigate all that the worlde thundreth against the godly, and at length hauing ouercome all kinde of calamities, shall giue them euerlasting blessednesse, and the crowne of eternall glorie that neuer shall fade away. Finally it is necessary for vs to be vnited vnto Christ in all our conuersation, and to haue him our companion, and helper in all that we do. For Christ sayth in playne wordes: Without me ye can do nothing. And indeed nothing can be wholesome, except Christ be both the helper and the top and roote of all the whole matter. The rest of the sentence of Christ, I shall expound afterward when wee come to the new Neuters, or lacke of both sides. In mine opinion therefore it appeareth playne inough that Christ vtterly forbiddeth al maner of Neutralitie, and straightly chargeth all to couple themselues vnto him alone. And those that do not so hee proclaymeth to be his enemies by manifest plaine wordes.

God is accustomed in his worde to compare

pare that straight bounden knotte, that is betweene him and his Church, to the knotte of marriage: and to make the feruencie of loue and of the knitting togither more euident, he compareth it to the hot flames of loue that is at the first in the new married bride & bridesgrome: and calleth the falling from his word whoredom, which comparison it self teacheth, that all manner of Neutralitie displeaseth God aboue all measure. Thus hee speaketh: I will marrie thee vnto my selfe for euermore, and I will marry thee vnto my selfe in righteousnesse and iudgement, in mercie and long suffering. And I will marrie thee vnto my selfe in faith, and thou shalt knowe that I am the Lord. *Ose.* 2. This lesson, ouer and besides that it expresseth an exceeding great force of the loue of God towards vs wretches, and requireth mutuall loue of vs againe, it describeth also the maner of Iustification, that righteousnesse commeth not of our owne powers, but of the loue and mercie of God towards vs, which we lay holde on and apply vnto our selues by fayth. And what is the cause thinke you, that God is called a gelous GOD: Is it not because he woulde haue thee addict vnto him alone, and hateth them moste deadly, yea punisheth them also, which turne that loue, which they ought

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to render vnto God, an other way. The Germanes haue a common saying of loue: Either loue me alone, or meddle not with me at all. *Allein mein, oder lass garsein.* And in England we haue an old said saw: Loue & Lordship, loueth no fellowship. For surely that ý is true and feruent loue indeede, can abide no fellow louer. And euen after the same sort doubtles God is a gelous God, as he hath witnessed in many earnest graue lessons both in the old testament & new, and made it seen by right sore slaughters in al ages. Therfore by no means it is free or allowed vnto any man to doubt or be a Neuter in ý articles of the fayth. And it is a wonder to see such presumptuous stubburnesse in men, that they had rather forsake the word, and neglect their own saluation to, and to abstein from both parts, than to assent vnto that one that goeth moste neere vnto the truth. Surely it cannot be chosen but such maner of folkes are ruled by carelesse securitie. For if they were exercised with neuer so small a conscience for the sins they had committed, necessitie would doubtlesse compell them to make conference of doctrines, and those that, could ease the sorrowfull troubled conscience. Therefore the matter it selfe arguetb, that they are the diuels prisoners, and cannot come vnto earnest repentance. But

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hearken a while, what fortresses & bulwarks they strengthen and defend themselues withall, and how highly they would be praised for their wisedom & (almost monstrous) modesty with their playing the Neuters. For where other of the simple and more ignorant sorte of people (as they be compted) be to quickly cõtented with mingle mangle religions or doctrines, they alone will be reckoned for the more discreet, in that they be aduised to tarry til it be acknowledged & determined by ordinary power, & to hold with no side till it be debated & openly alowed by common authority. For this is their saying: It is not for me to take vp so weighty matters of contention and controuersie, and to condemne either part to mine own harme. I see there is most earnest sore contentions about matters of moste weightie importance. There fall out among themselues, not the common vnlearned lewd people, but men of great profound knowledge in the scriptures, and notably learned in all the tongues. Both parts seek to ground their doctrine vpon scriptures, I heare both parts boast themselues to be the Church. Besides that they bee men of both sides which may erre. And moreouer men may espie faultes in both partes, and that no small or a fewe faultes. And though the one parte specially

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seeme to be the neerer vnto the trueth, yet the authoritie and the long continuance of that other part make mee on the other side to thinke it best for me to tarry still in a meane. These and many other reasons they gather like studious forecasting men, and manie times they vtter thē among their familiars in great sadnesse, and so carry such as be of the vnlearned sorte with them in the gulfe of doubtes.

Therefore I will answere them in order at few words. Yea forsooth it is euen thy dutie to discerne euery doctrine whatsoeuer it is concerning saluation and the true seruing of God, what man soeuer it were that taught it: and to giue sentence, this is agreeable vnto the trueth, that is not: this I receiue and follow, that I detest and hold accursed.

It is a moste false erroneous opinion, to thinke that no man hath to doe to iudge vpon doctrines but the Pope of Rome, Bishops, and men of his popish leauen. For the worde is aswell giuen to me and to thee, and GOD commaundeth vs straightly to giue place vnto it, to keepe it, and to discerne mens iugglinges from it, as vnto Peter, or Paule, or them that say they haue the gouernance of the Church at this day. Like as wee haue all neede of saluation, euen so must euery one

needes be a iudge vpon doctrines. Who were they, I pray thee, that Christ saide vnto, My sheepe heare my voyce, and followe not a stranger, but abhore his voyce? doth he not bid that the sheepe which are willing to follow their shepheard Christ, shoulde giue diligent eare to the voyces of cryers, that is to say, teachers, and discerne which is the true shepheardes voyce that they ought to follow, and which is the seducer or Wolfes voyce, which they ought to hate and flee frō: If thou wilt not do thus, but sticke still in a meane, thou canst not be Christs sheep: no, thou shalt be the Wolfes pray. Christ giueth this warning. Beware of false Prophets, that come to you in sheepes clothing, and inwardly be rauening Wolfes. *Matth.7.* But vnto whome giueth he this commandement, vnto none but the Apostles: Yes forsooth to all the the whole multitude that came vnto him to heare the worde of God. Therefore if euerie one ought to beware of false teachers, surely euery one must needes iudge of their doctrines, that he be not deceiued. *Ephes.4.*

Now wee are not like children wauering to be carried about with euery winde of doctrine, by the wilinesse of men, and subtill sleight, which they lye in wayte to deceiue vs withall, doth not Paule teach vs in this

place,

place, to be stedfast and constant in the truth, and abhorre all other glosed doctrines, which the deceauers go about to weaken our fayth withall: And sure this cannot be done without iudgement. Proue all thinges and hold that is good. 1. *Thes.* 5. It is a manifest plain commandement, that euery one of vs shoulde try doctrines by the truth of Gods word, as the true touchstone, and to know, reiect, and condemne all strange doctrines, and to keepe the trueth safe and vncorrupt. For he biddeth thee, hold that is good and sound doctrine. He will not haue thee to vse an vnseasonable modestie in this case, as though it were not for thee to iudge vpon these matters, but eyther to hold ỳ is good or els to let it vtterly alone. Dearely beloued, beleue not euery spirit, but proue the spirites whether they be of God, for many false prophets are gone into the world. *Ioh.* 4. This saying doth not onely giue power vnto all christians to iudge vppon euery doctrine, but also it straightly chargeth euery one to proue and examine, to disseuer falshood from truth, and constantly to keep the word of God. But here do the Neuters alwaies seek shiftes and starting holes. What a confusion shall this be (say they) if euery one shalbe suffered to giue sentence vpon controuersies of religions? I answere.

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There is no cause, why any confusion shoulde be dread at all. It shall be necessary for all mens iudgements and sentences to agree in one, and to conclude all vnto one end: For there is but onely one rule to iudge by, and but one foundation, (neither may a man decline from it so much as one hayres bredth) that is the pure word of God proclaymed by Christes own mouth, not mingled with mens gloses: and this word is conteined in the book of the prophets and apostles. For euery one is not freely suffered (as these womanly sober men are too too afrayd of) to iudge as it liketh himselfe, but all power of iudgement (I say) is tyed to the worde of God. If any swarue from it, they are surely out of the way. All this (as I haue often sayd before) must be taken that I meane, as concerning the articles of the fayth.

After ỳ same maner may this cold feeble excuse of theirs be wiped away: I acknowledg mine own weaknes in these fore hard matters of controuersie, & I my selfe might fall. And therfore I had rather be a Neuter still, than to stop so great a discorde. I answere, It is true, we are all to much to weake, to childish, to foolish, & to blind in such weighty matters. But the iudgement dependeth not of our ability, but of the word of God, which al mẽ haue

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giuen them, and are put in trust withall, and is such a one that it cannot be intricate or obscure vnto any man, so that he haue any exercise in the troubles of conscience, and pray cōtinually vnto God for helpe: as in the first of *James*. If anie of you want wisedome, Let him craue it of God, which giueth liberally to all, and casteth no man in the teeth, and it shalbe giuen him. Therefore thou art bounden by the commaundement of God to learn the word that the sonne of God hath declared, what maner a man or woman soeuer thou be. And then thou oughtest according to that word of God which is comprised in the Prophetes and Apostles writinges, to iudge vppon all religions and all doctrines, whether thou be weake or strong, whether thou bee of the Clergie or Laitie, whether thou be learned or vnlearned, whether thou be old or yong. For thou hearest it sayd: If anie man preach any other Gospel, cursed be he, and heare him not.

And to be plaine, I thinke those mens rashnesse and shamelesse impudencie is to be disallowed and erpressed, yea to be wel punished, which as it were with vnwashen hands meddle with these controuersies, and not knowing the grounde of the matters, doe take vppon them to iudge as it liketh themselues.

selues. For seeing there is none other rule to iudge by but the onely word of God, necessity requireth that they which shall iudge be not altogither ignorant in it. And it is not all one, to be weake in the articles, and not be able to beleeue constantly in them: and to acknowledge the trueth, and to pronounce according to the trueth, and to disseuer strange doctrines from it. As, we beleeue all is true, that is conteined in the holy sacred Bible, but yet our faith is feeble, and hath not that perfection that it ought to haue. But I haue not so great knowledge in the bible (you wil say) nor am of so quicke a iudgement, to haue all the testimonies of the olde Testament and newe vppon my fingers endes. I answere. Lo, I will shew thee short a handsome way. Art thou a christian? Canst thou say the parts of the Catechisme? I thinke there is no christian in all the worlde, that will be so wickedly rude, as not to knowe so few Chapters. Yes fortie thousand in England.

Nowe let those Chapters of the Catechisme be vnto thee in stead of a moste sure perfect rule to examine, to trie, and to iudge all Religions and all doctrines by. For it is certayne that the Catechisme is a short handsome summe of all the whole Bible, and conteineth all that is required of necessitie

vnto faith and vnto our saluation, as no christian will denie. Then if thou perceiuest by diligent marking and consideration setting aside the respect of persons, not regarding the gay shewe and pretence of the doctrines, and bideling thine owne priuate affections, that it agreeth with thy Catechisme, that is alledged, thou mayest freely and safely take it it for the trueth it selfe: but if thou find their doctrine or obseruances to accorde with the partes of the Catechisme no more, than my fist vpon thine eye, as they say, but that all the allegations be vnheard, strange, and repugnant, howe pleasaunt and howe gay soeuer they seeme vnto reason, then thou mayest freely and flatly pronounce, that they are meere lyes and nothing but false iuglinges of the verie Diuell himselfe. As by example.

Our aduersaries teache, that it is in mans owne power to fulfill the lawe of GOD in this life, and by this meanes, that is say, by the deedes of the lawe to deserue righteousnesse and eternall life. Nowe if thou wilt handsomely trie out that Doctrine, whether it bee true or not, applie and lay the partes of thy Catechisme vnto it. If it agree, there is no doubt, but it is true: and if not, then it is certainly erro-

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neous and blasphemous. Nowe the tenne commaundementes saye: Thou shalt haue none other Gods. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy GOD in vayne, and so forth. Therefore the lawe biddeth thee doe, that thou doest not. For the lawe doth alwayes accuse thee, and maketh thee giltie, as the Apostle teacheth: The lawe worketh wrath. And what coulde it doe else, seeing man is not able naturally by reason of sinne to accomplish perfect entyre obedience both outwardly and inwardly to God, according to the tenne commaundementes. Question with thine owne heart, and it shall beare witnesse agaynst thee.

The Apostles Creede sayth, that Christ alone is the ransome, and reconciled vs vnto his offended father, by his onely merite, dispatched euerlasting death by his death, brake the Serpentes head, and set the gate vnto eternall life wide open, where he nowe sitteth on the fathers right hand, reigning in in like power, Maiestie, and Glorie, and hath subdued all that is aboue heauen or beneath, vnder his owne power: Thou hearest not one iote of mention made heere of mens woorkes: Wee confesse Christ ouelie to bee the slayne Sacrifice for our sinnes.

The Lordes prayer biddeth vs pray continually: And forgiue vs our trespasses. Therfore thou art farre wide from fulfilling of the Lawe. Baptisme teacheth cleerely, that we are washed only of free mercie by the merite of Christ. The wordes of Absolution declare forgiuenesse of sinnes freely for the onely Passion of Christes sake. And the Lordes supper doth mosse mightily teach the same, that onely for the body and bloud of Christ, that is, for his Passions sake, which we apply vnto our selues by fayth, we are in the state of grace and haue eternall life: Whereof a sure warrant is giuen vnto euery one in the vse of the sacrament, euen the very body in bread, and the bloud in wine spiritually to feede vppon. Heereof it followeth most plainely. Ergo all the partes of the Catechisme doe impugne and damne that Doctrine of fulfilling the lawe, and righteousnesse of mans workes. For all the parts of it leade vs vnto Christ alone: and so doth also the law it selfe (which neuertheleſſe speaketh of workes) according to this: The law is our Schoolmaister vnto Christ. *Galathians* 3. For it setteth foorth the greatnesse and vglinesse of our sinnes playnely before oure eyes and biddeth vs with open mouth despayre of our selues: and couertly

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it driueth vs to seeke the benefite of another, that is, of Christ, by which wee may be euerlastingly blessed.

An other example. Our aduersaries contend, that the Saintes departed nowe liuing with God in eternall life are to bee prayed vnto. See whether thy Catechisme allowe that doctrine or not: The first of the teme commaundementes sayth thus: Thou shalt haue none other Gods. But to call vppon Saintes departed out of this life, is to haue other Gods. For inuocation is nothing else than to ascribe a certaine almighty power to them that be absent, aswell in seeing the motions of the heart and hearing of prayers, as in power to giue helpe. But God reporteth in the declaration of the ten commaundementes, that hee is a gelous God. And *Esay* 42. he sayth, He will not suffer the honour due vnto him to be attributed vnto none other. Therefore inuocation of the Saintes departed is against the first and chiefest commaundement of all. The Apostles Creede teacheth vs to beleeue in God the father, the sonne, and the holy Ghost, and not onely to acknowledge this our onely GOD as the onely fountaine of all goodnesse, of lyfe, liuing, remission of sinnes and saluation, but also to aske and begge

of him alone all good thinges both of bodie and soule. Then it followeth that wee haue no neede of dead Saintes helpe to obteine these withall.

The Lordes prayer teacheth vs expresse-ly to direct our mind and words, not to anie Saint, and to craue bodily and Ghostly goodnesse eyther of this life or of the lyfe e-uerlasting of them, but vnto this God the Father, which hath reuealed hymselfe in the Sonne and accepted vs, by this same onelie begotten Sonne to bee his Children. Ney-ther are wee baptised in the name of anie creature, but in the name of the Father, and of the Sonne, and of the holy Ghost, that is to saie, that wee shoulde acknow-ledge and call vppon this GOD, our one-ly helper and Sauiour. We are assoyled of our sinnes onely in the name and merite of Christ without mention making of any saint, as Christ sayth: He that beleeueth in me, shall liue.

Finally in the vse of the Lordes Sup-per, the Sacrament of the bodie and bloud of Christ is giuen vs, for a testimonie that Christ is our onely mercy seate, Bishoppe and king, of whome onely we may depend, who onely reconcileth vs vnto the Father, for whole sake onely wee haue all mener of

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good thinges. Thou hearest not that the Sacrament of the bodie and bloud of anie maner of Saintes is deliuered vs, or that they are appoynted to bee our mediatours before God. Therefore these partes of thy Catechisme doe all agree in one, and clappe and hisse out the Doctrine of inuocation of the Saintes departed: and declare it moste euidently to be moste high blasphemie against the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Ghost. Looke I pray thee, what iudgement thou couldest haue more speedie and more easie than this is.

Indeede it is childish and rusticall, I say not nay, but yet it is true, and moste certaine. These examples I rehearse, that Neuters may be abashed and ashamed in making their excuses, if they be not (as for the moste part they are) past all shame.

But yet these Nicholas Neuters are not satisfied. For they stand very wonderfully in their owne conceites. They say, that there bee very profound learned men on both partes, and both partes holde of the Scriptures: and neither part of them both hath all false, but some thinges are so true, that without heresie they cannot bee denyed. As, the Papistes doe speake rightlie of the Articles of the Trinitie,

they talke truely of Creation, they confesse Originall sinne, they teache touching Redemption by Christ, that hee alone was obiected and appoynted to dispatche sinne and the effectes of sinne, and that hee onely ouercame our enemies, Sathan, death, and hell, and went triumphantly into Heauen, and there sitteth now at the Fathers right hand, according to the Prophetes sayinges. These and certaine other matters the Gospellers (as they call them) acknowledge to bee true, and agreeable to the word of God, and to the testimonies added vnto the word. Therefore they say, it is not meet for them to condemne eyther part, but rather will restraine themselues from both sides, till they agree all in some Counsaile, and till the trueth be shewed openly abroad, as if it were digged out of a moste deepe darke dungeon. I answere. I shewed you before by certaine euident testimonies of the holy Scripture, that wee are bounden and constrayned by the commaundement of GOD, to iudge vppon doctrines according to the prescribed rule and fashion, that wee be not carried about with euery blustring winde of doctrines, nor haue respect to anie person. For the word of God, wherein our soules health must be sought, consisteth not in any humaine persons, of howe

high degree soeuer they be, but in the authour of it, God and his sonne Iesus Christ, we are all the sheepe of one onely shepheard Christ. And therefore are we bounden all to acknowledge and follow his voice, and quickly to iudge, discerne, cast away, and hate other strange and euill fauoured golyng noyses.

Moreouer I haue also layd this foundation before: that the worde of God is onely one and a simple plaine one, and hath also one perpetuall maner of meaning, agreeable to it selfe. But forasmuch as the doctrine of the Papistes and the doctrine of the Gospellers (for so we call that doctrine nowe which in these latter dayes of the worlde is through the mightie great benefite of God, cleansed and healed vp by the instrument of God. M. Luther and others from moste filthy corruptions) doe varrie the one against the other in other Articles of the faith moste extreamely, it standeth vs in hand to looke warily about vs, which doctrine agreeth with the one onely ground worke and foundation (I meane, the heauenly word of God) and which doth not. And that wee shall soone perceiue, in case that wee be but meetly acquainted in Gods worde, and referre all to the concordaunce of fayth, as Paule giueth vs

warning

warning: howbeit we haue neede of the holy Ghost, which guideth vs into all trueth, to bee our guide vnto that matter. For where he is not the leader, and where men take that arrogantly vpon their owne wisedome, which pertaineth onely to the power of God, there is no end of errors, and mens eyes are daseled as it were in a mase, that they cannot see the trueth. And Christ sayth. I came into the world vnto iudgement, that those which see not, may see, and they that see, may be made blinde. *Ioh.9.*

Therefore looke what trueth our aduersaries haue, that wee receiue with moste ready good will: but where they peruert the trueth of GOD with the dreames of men, there they must needes giue vs leaue to dissent from them as God commaundeth vs. doest thou not knowe, that Christ and hys Apostles tolde before hand, that moste pestilent noysome Sectaries should come with the name of Christ, saying: lo, here is Christ, lo, there is Christ: Doth not hee that hath all thinges both past, present, and to come, plainely before thine eyes say, that false prophetes clothed not in a Wolfe or a Beares skinne, but in Sheepes araye, shoulde make hauocke of Christes sheepfold? What? Doth not the chosen vessell of God beeing

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led by the spirite of Christ tell the same tale. Satan himselfe (sayth he) is transfigured unto an Angell of light. It is no great thing then, though his ministers be transfigured like the ministers of righteousnesse, whose ende shall bee accordyng to their woorkes, 2. *Corrinth.* 11.

Did not Satan put on that Angellike visour, when he tooke vpon him in Paradise to interprete the commaundement of God, concerning the forbidding of the Apple, and with that visour plucked all mankinde, with all mans whole posterrtie (which is an horrible hearing) with one sleightie shift, and with one enterprise, quite away from God, and subdued them vnder his owne tyrannie: Therefore suffer not thy selfe by fine paynted wordes and citing of the Scripture, to bee shifted away from the foundation. For there was neuer yet anie heretike, but hee sayde, hee brought foorth holy Scripture, and shewed the true meaning of it, and sought nothing so muche as the wealth of mennes soules. For as for those that haue hurled a way the bookes of holy Scriptures, eyther a great part of them altogether, and haue deuised a certaine newe strange glosse, as they haue vttered themselues too grossely, and might bee the more easily knowen,

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and so they may yet, I meane that table specially that is called the Church. But you will say: there are of the Papistes very excellent men and profoundly skilled in holie Scriptures, and their meaning is also to set and establishe their matters out of the fountaynes of the Prophetes and Apostles. Well, let them be. Doest thou not knowe that the Diuell (as I sayde before) hath an Angelike nature and wisedome, and yet wee must not beleeue him for all that? Hearken what Paule speaketh out of the Prophet: I will destroy the wisedome of the wise, and reproue the prudence of the prudent? *Esa.29 Act.1. Esa.33.1. Corin.1.* Where is the wise man? Where is the searcher out of this world? Hath not God made the wisedome of this worlde foolish? Yea but both partes may swarue from the truth, and be deceiued, and gesse at a venture, as the blinde man casteth his staffe. Therefore perchaunce the trueth lieth yet still drowned in the deepe, as Democritus was woont to say. I answere. If there were no monumentes left, that conteine the plaine mind of God concerning the articles of the fayth, and the true seruing of God, perhappes this doubt might haue some place, but thou hast openly before thine eyes the writinges of the Prophetes and Apostles.

postles confirmed with many notable great myracles: and the sonne of God himselfe bare record vnto those Sermons of the Prophets and Apostles. Therefore the trueth lyeth not locked vp nor buried in a deepe darke dungeon, but it is brought forth into the light and set abroad plainly as it were agaynst the noone Sunne. Then it is a moste false perswasion to say, that the bookes of holy scripture are full of figuratiue riddles, which cannot bee expounded or vnderstoode. God hath not rolled vp his doctrine in darkenesse, but according to his owne wisedome, he hath set forth, simply, playnly and most openly, vnto all folkes, and would haue all to vnderstand it. I pray thee, what is more simple and more playne than Christes owne Sermons be? Hee frameth himselfe after the capacitie of the leaaners, he vseth such common and homely maner of speache, as the vulgar people doe. And though hee spake some thinges in parables, yet they were eyther knowne of the godly beforehand at that tyme, or els hee opened them plainely inough himselfe. Of the same sorte be the thinges that the Prophets and Apostles haue by the spirit of GOD vttered in their writinges.

And it cannot bee chosen but there is a

Church

Church of God, and that a visible Churche vppon earth, according to the article of our Creede: I beleeue that there is one holy Catholicke Churche. And this Church can not erre in the principle articles of the Fayth. For if it erre in them, it cannot be the Church of God. Therfore both the truth and the verie proper and true vnderstanding of the worde must needes bee in that congregation. Besides this, it can none otherwise bee, but this Church is in that people, where the doctrine of the Prophetes and Apostles is vncorruptly taught. For it is not curiously to be sought for, among the Turks, Scythians, or Iewes, being as they bee nowe, nor among other nations, which for the moste part haue no knowledge of Gods worde at all, and none they desire to haue. Yet it is to bee thought that there be some members of the true Church, euen among those nations scattered heere and there abroad.

Then it followeth: that forasmuch as both wee and our aduersaries the Papistes doe acknowledge and receiue the bookes of the Prophetes and Apostles, eyther wee are the true Church of God, or they: eyther we haue the onely one, trueth of God, or they. For in these matters which we barrie in, namelie

lie in the Articles of the fayth, neyther can both partes be true, nor both partes false: according to my principle: There is but one trueth, and not manifold truthes. And what can be the Churche of God, if we Gospellers (as we are called) be not: who shall haue the trueth if wee haue it not: For first wee embrace, holde, and professe the word of GOD purely without the dregges of mens traditions, wee moste iustly hate those thinges that are imagined by mans owne brayne, and doe violently wrong to the word of God, as the Apostle sayth: If anie preache an other Gospel, cursed be hee. But the Papistes mingle and marre all with their owne gloses and mennes commentaryes, and without them their minde is to allow nothing.

We seeke nothing but Christ in the olde Testament and newe, as the onely pith and substance, and him we take for our onely reconciliatour, Sauiour, and Mediatour and Bishop. But the Papistes extoll the dignitie and merites of mens workes, and wrethe all that is conteyned in both the Testamentes to make Christ the beginning of iustification, and themselues the finishers and perfect makers vp of iustification.

We affirme that those obseruances onely be accep-

acceptable vnto God, that are specified in his certaine written worde. But the Papistes enforce men to those obseruances and Godseruice that are deuised by the arrogancie and rashnesse of man, and ascribe more worthinesse vnto them, then to those that are commaunded of GOD himselfe. We abhorre Idolatrie. But the Papistes are manifest Idolaters, in that they honour the Saintes departed with the honour due to GOD, and call vppon them to bee their intercessoures and helpers: and leade men rather vnto the virgine Mary than to Christ. We keepe the Sacramentes entyre and whole still, according to the forme of Christes owne institution. But the Papistes doe wickedly mangle the sacraments, which Christ hath ordained and change the forme it selfe. For of the receiuing of the Sacrament of our Lordes bodie and bloud, they make an open offering, auayleable not onely vnto the quicke but also to the dead, that lye broyling in Purgatorie.

We allowe honest and lawfull wedlocke in all states. But the Papistes call it a foule sinne (yea worthy to be punished with death) if an Ecclesiasticall person be merryed, as though marriage were the foulest thing that coulde bee, and were an hinderance to

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the ministerie by all meanes. Hereby it is no hard matter to iudge, which is the Churche, and what congregation is neerer vnto the sincere word of God. So we being certified by these and other sure tokens, haue no doubt to pronounce plainly that the true Church of God is among vs, wherein God worketh effectually by his worde, and regenerateth very many vnto eternall life. Contrariwise we are not afrayde to affirme that all obstinate wilfull papistes, which ioyne not themselues vnto this pure doctrine, and true seruing of God, are barred out of this true Church. And, if there be any weakelinges that grone being yet still vnder the Popes tyrannous yoke, yet it is meete for them to beare their good will vnto this sound doctrine and true seruing of God.

The Pope hath many markes that proue him to be the notable great Antichrist, but euery body may easily perceiue them, & therfore I thinke it but lost labour to make anie further rehearsall of them in his place: This geare is so manifest, that euen our enemies themselues are enforced almost to graunt thē: but yet they seeke other cloked pretences for all that. They say it seemeth not like to be true, that we are the Churche, seeing wee be but a few in number, and in no high authori-

tie, and sprong vp but of late yeares. Contrariwise, that it seemeth more like to be true, that the Pope and his be the Church. For they are many moe than wee: and are men of much higher authoritie than we, they beare the swinge in the gouernment of the Church, and haue had this most gay glorious title a long season. And it is not to be thought that God hath left and yet leaueth still so goodly a companie of men in errour, and that he hath hidden, or yet doth hide still the truth from so manie men being most famously seen in all kinde of learning. I answere. This obiection doth tosse and torment very manie folkes mindes greeuously sore: Especiallie those that haue not beene as yet thoroughly inough skilled in the outward fact of the Churche continually from the beginning. Marke I pray thee, which a one the Church hath bene in all ages. Hath not the number of the wicked alwayes exceeded the number of the godly innumerably? Caines Churche was farre gorgeouser and of much greater number then Seth his Church was. The fathers wandred about from place to place without certaine seate to abide in, and yet they had the Church onely in their families. The other multitude that was spred euery where abroad vpon the best places of the earth, was

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the most wicked. At the generall flood wherein all mankinde was drowned, onely Noah and his wife, with his three sonnes and their wiues, was the Church. Passe forth in order through all ages vnto these dayes, and you shall see that the Church of God was but a small companie and an abiect sort of people in respect of the multitude of worldlinges. Therefore the Prophetes did many times preach agaynst that slaunder, concerning the multitude: If the Lorde of hostes had not left vs seede, wee had beene like Sodome, and made like Gomorra, *Esay*. 1. Also, I will leaue in the midst of thee a poore people and a needie, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. *Sopho*. 3 Also: He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the worlde knewe him not. *Iohn* 1. Also. He came into his owne, and his owne receiued him not. Also, Be not afrayd little flocke. *Luke* 12. Suffer not thy selfe therefore to bee so greatly combred with their vayne title, onely beholde the Churche, that was in Christes time. Were not the Bishops of Ierusalem and their order in the highest estate of the Church, were they not in opinion of learning, in wealth, and in multitude farre aboue the silly wandring Christ & the fishers, and the

other simple people that folowed Christ: And yet these mosse contemned poore silly soules, were the church, which God delighted in, and began his eternall kingdome in by his sonne. And euen now the case standeth after Paules saying: Not manie wise after the flesh, not manie mightie, not manie noble: but God hath chosen the foolishe thinges of the worlde, to confound the wise, and the weake thinges of the worlde hath God chosen to confound the strong: and the vnnoble of the world and things of no reputation hath God chosen, and things that be not, to destroy the things that be, that no flesh should glory in his sight. 1. *Cor.* 1. And Christ sayth. The poore receiue the Gospel, happie is he that is not offended in me. *Mat.* 11. And therefore Simeon prophecied that this babe, whose presence made him so glad, was put for a signe, to be gaynsayd. And the cause why the greatest and most regarded part of mankinde are cast awaie from God, is because they beleeue not, that is, they receiue not by sayth the mercie that is offered them in Christ: and the Scripture reporteth that the diuell is the prince of this world, and worketh effectually in the people of vnbelieke. As for any other secreter cause than this, it is not lawfull for vs to searche:

Finally

Finally the consent of holy scriptures, and the assent of all godly men beare plentiful record, that our doctrine is no new learning.

Neither ought it to be deemed, which is the church principally by the maners of men, but by the doctrine. I say not nay but there are among vs many vices, which deforme the bewtie of the Church euil fauouredly, but yet there are more enormious and heynouser faultes committed by the rable of the papists, than by the Gospellers: as (I will onely reckon vp a few thinges of the second table) the despising of father and mother, Buggery, Rape, and vnsaciable couetousnesse, fraudes, lyes, ryot, hautinesse, crueltie, thirsting after innocent bloud, most vniust murthers, and innumerable other.

Neither is long continuance a sure argument of the trueth, specially when it is falsely alledged. Caynes Churche is auncient inough at this day, and yet for all that it is a wicked and a cursed Church. And it is to no purpose for a man to thinke it good for him to restrayne hys consent, till all dissentions be taken out of ỳ way in some counsaile to come, and till all confesse the trueth together. For first the scripture sayth: I wil put enmitie betweene the serpent and the seede of the woman, *Gen.3.* This enmitie shall haue no

ende, as long as the sonne of God liueth and the diuell. And the Apostle sayth: There must needes be heresies. 1. *Cor.* 11. Christ sayth that the spirite of lying shall reigne in the latter dayes so mightily, that the verie elect, if it were possible shoulde be brought into error. *Matth.* 24.

Besides this there shall neuer be Counsaile after such a sort that the pope shal cleane cast away the corrupt toyes of mens traditions, and receiue pure trueth, and after that perswade all the worlde to embrace the same. For the Pope cannot choose but be like himselfe, that is to say, Antichrist. Be not deceiued. For he shall neuer be content to let hys Maiestie, power, and tyrannie be brought in daunger: which should surely follow, in case he should hold with the trueth. For the truth would abate and destroy the kingdome of Antichrist, which the Pope occupieth at this day. Thirdly thy life shall not last so long. For how many thinkest thou haue alreadie taken their leaue with this world, before anie such Counsaile as thou wishest for, be kept? Doest thou dreame, that their soules flie up and downe still among folkes, and tarry for the determination of such a Counsaile? In deede they were in a shrewd euill case, if they were not at a poynt and determined in

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their heartes, what doctrine they would dye in. For it is out of all peraduenture, they that beleeued not in Christ, shall not haue euerlasting life. *Ioh.3.* Heereby except I be deceiued, it is plainely inough perceiued, that Neuters are made starke mad with meere opinions, nay, that they are combred and wonderfully crabbed in the diuels toyes, that they should not graunt to the trueth, and come vnto wholesome repentance. For this is the end of Neutralitie, that a man liue careless, without the feare of God, and not acknowledge his sinnes, without fayth and comfort of conscience, without prayer, and without confessing of the trueth. For what should he eyther repent him of, or pray for, or confesse, that is not fully at a poynt yet, which part is the Church, nor which part setteth foorth the worde of God rightly. There are Neuters indeed men without God, and most grosse Epicures. For in the worde of God, which the Church hath and followeth, God is onely acknowledged and serued. For in asmuch as they couple not themselues to that congregation, and hatch vp doubtfull opinions, is not possible for them eyther to haue or serue God. And let not those wise discreete sober men thinke, that if they dye in that errour, they shall haue any excuse before God.

For the iudgements of God are certainly setled: He that beleeueth not, is already iudged. And hee that will not confesse me before men, him will not I confesse before my father which is in heauen.

Hitherto nowe let that I haue sayd, be spoken touching the grosse playn Neuters, whom I am content to name the old Neuters: and yet very many such as they spring vp in these our dayes, when controuersies of Religion are moued. And now will I also by the helpe of God speake somewhat concerning the new and the more finer Neuters, or Iacks of both sides rather. They are almost cleane contrarie to these other before, that is, they will after a fashion bee in familiar friendship with both partes, and giue as it were the one hand to the Gospellers, and the other to the Papistes. For there are new toyes deuised and trimmed vp euery day more and more.

But I haue bene somewhat too long in the first part. For many of these matters may be referred also into this second part.

The end of the first part.

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THE SECOND PART of this Booke.

NOwe because I will not comber the reader with long circumstances, there is another question, whether a man may lawfully play Iacke of both sides after such sorte, that he may somewhat take the papistes part, so as he may seeme to be the neerer vnto them, and to beare a better heart to them than to the other, and by that meanes please them: and yet for all that, leane so to the Gospellers, as hee seeme not altogither gone nor parted away from them, and by this shift seeke as it were a meane to haue both parts his friends still, and to be esteemed among the Gospellers no Apostata, and on the other side no wilfull person nor rebell: and all to this one end, to get fauour at those mens hands, which haue chiefe authority in things, or of them that may doe a man harme and so to keepe our selues and ours in sure safegard still.

Vnto this Neutralitie and playing Iacke of both sides, there is no small occasion ministred by those that halt and wauer too much in the sincere doctrine of the Gospell, which

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are scarce the breadth of my nayle from Apostasie. They take payns (God woteth) to frame goodly gay concordes of religions manie wayes, and dissuade folkes from the simple plaine confessing of the trueth for feare of persecution and for worldly commodities sake. But specially there are a certaine sort of men called Maister make adoe, that take vpon them the ouersight and compassing of mane matters, which forgetting their owne vocations, set their one foote in the court and the other in the Church, and according to their worldly mother wit they will temper, writhe, and limite euen the lawe of God, as it liketh themselues, and as they thinke it fit for the worlde either to augment or at least to keepe safe temporall substance by. And this is compted a singular and a necessary wisedome to auoyd the greatest damages and shames withall. For the pretence and outward appearance at a blushe is wonderous goodly and pleasant, as I shall declare afterward. The aunswere is briefe, plaine, and easie: It is not lawfull for a man to play the Iacke of both sides after that fashion. For if the contention were about any matter of small importance, that is to say, about apparel that were not altogither slanderous, or any ceremonie alone that were not openly blasphemous, then a-

greement might be easily had, euery bodie perceiueth it well inough: and it made no great matter, though a man applyed himselfe to both partes for a time. For the conscience could catche no harme thereby. But the principall matter of this controuersie is in the articles of the fayth, and in the chiefe poyntes touching the seruice of God, wherein the conscience must needes be at a sure stay, and no wauering may in any wise bee admitted in this behalfe. And the cause why, is, that God by his onely sonne hath openly proclaymed his plaine sentence from heauen, and the same he will haue to stand in full strength and vertue without altering for euermore, and streightly chargeth all folkes to giue audience and credence vnto that worde and to none other: And to hurle away and condemne all that disagreeth from it. For thus doth God beginne hys tenne commandementes. Thou shalt haue none other Gods. And hee nameth himselfe a strong gelous GOD, for he requireth vs to hold vs wholly to him, and threatneth dreadful paines agaynst them, that neglect him which is the true God in deede, and lurke vnto other Gods, or receiue anie other word that is contrary to this one onely worde. The father af heauen hymselfe, in that wonderfull proclamation ẏ was

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made in the mount, sayth with plaine wordes. This is my sonne, in whom I delight, heare him. And this saying pertaineth vnto al men of all ages. For it bindeth all folkes by expresse words vnto the doctrine of this one only Archshepheard: and chargeth that no audience be giuen to other that teach contrary: and therewithall he damneth all men that vse familiar daliance with the enemies of the Gospel. For so they become disobedient vnto this proclamation. It was not at the liberty of the Apostles or other that sought the true knowledge of God and the saluation of their owne soules, to beare fire in the one hand and water in the other (as they say) nor to dally with Pharisees, the enemies of the heauenly doctrine, but they must needes follow Christ alone and none but him. And therfore he calleth his Apostles with this kinde of speech: Follow me. Also when hee setteth foorth the form of ẏ whole religion of Christ, he sayth in a few short words: If any wil follow me, let him take vp his crosse, & follow me. *Mat.* 8 Also, If you abide in my word, ye shall be my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the trueth, and the trueth shall make you free. *Ioh* 8. Also, If any man loue me, he shal keepe my worde, and my father shall loue him, and we shall come vnto him, & make

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a dwelling place with him. He that loueth not me keepeth not my sayinges. *Iohn* 14. Also, Iohn Baptist did with his mouth, with his finger, and with all his doinges shew only Christ and none but him, saying: Beholde the lambe of God that taketh away the sinnes of the world. *Iohn*. 1. Also, If any preach an other gospel, cursed be he. *Gal*. 1 And the sayinges of the Prophet agree to the same, As: Thou shalt not decline from the commandementes of God, neither on the right hand nor on the left. *Deut*. 8. But I haue spoken of that before.

Hereby now it euidently appeareth, that we are all bound to one part alone, that is, to that part wherein the word of Christ is purely preached, the sacraments sincerely ministred, and the true seruice of God diligently aduaunced.

Secondarily, there be two speciall contradictions, two deadly foes, and vnagreeable: Beliall or the Diuell, and Christ: light and darkenesse: the true Church and the false: the tyrannie of Antichrist, and the kingdome of the sonne of G O D. For it was tolde before hand in very paradise: that there should be enemitie betweene the Serpent and the seede of the woman. And Iohn sayth: The sonne of God hath appeared,

to destroy the workes of the Diuell: *Ioh.3.* And this is manifest also that Antichrist doth all that hee can agaynst Christ with all the paynes that he hath in his body. For all the kingdome is the seate and power of the diuell himselfe, most directly against the kingdome of Christ as it is by the goodnes of God more cleare at this present, than the sunne light at noone dayes. The Pope doth most apparantly blur, yea rather defile and scrape awaie the honour and glorie of Christ, in that hee braggeth (like the diuell) that man is able to accomplish the obedience of the lawe. What good did Christ then? He dyed in vayne, *Paul* sayth, if righteousnesse come by the deedes of the law. *Galat.2.* And in that hee attributeth not iustification whole and absolutely perfite vnto Christ, but the beginning of iustification onely. For his doctrine is, that man is first accepted freely by the onely merite of Christ, And then that hee hath qualities powred into him, which afterward increase, and bee augmented, & enlarged after such sorte, that they fulfill the begunne iustification, and bring it vnto perfection. By this meanes there is no small glorie nipped away from the sonne of God. Also, he biddeth men go to saintes now liuing with God, and crie to them to be their intercessours and helpers, contrary to this

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commandement and promise: Whatsoeuer ye shall aske the father in my name, he shall giue it you. Iohn, 16.

Agayn in this behalfe, Christ hath notable iniurie in that hee is not taken nor called vpon alone for the onely Bishop, Mediatour, and Intercessour. The Sacramentes that Christ instituted are moste cruelly mangled and torne, and altogither transformed into an other vse. Besides this there be other Sacramentes deuised without the worde of God, which are exalted so high, that they are eyther made cherkinate with Christes sacramentes, or else set aboue them.

As by example. The lay people are contrary to the moste manifest institution of Christ, forbidden the vse of the Sacrament of Christes bloud: and they be proclaymed Heretikes all the worlde ouer, that thinke or do to the contrary. So annoynting is compted for one of the Sacramentes, and hath monstrous knicke knackes inuiagined vnto it, to the vtter reproch of the rest of the Sacramentes.

Christ is also pulled down out of ỳ throne of his Maiestie, seeing the pope maketh himself the foundation and head of the church and taketh vppon him a woonderfull free power in chaunging of doctrines and putting in

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new, in forging of newe Articles of fayth, and heaping of traditions. And all to this onely end, that the kingdome of Christ might perish, and the kingdome of Antichrist be confirmed and enlarged. I will in this place make no rehearsall, with what craft, with what studious trauaile, and with what incredible power, Antichrist assaulteth the sonne of God, least anie man should be offended with long declaration.

Furthermore thou canst neuer looke to make peace betweene these enemies by anie possible meanes. Then whereto seekest thou so narrow shiftes to agree them, eyther thorowly, or in part, that is, either in doctrine and ceremonies altogither, or in ceremonies alone? Christ sayth: No man can serue two maisters at once, the one hee shall loue, and the other he shal hate, *Matth.6.* And it is manifest, that the Pope is Antichrist.

The pope is Antichrist.

For hee hath these notable markes to be knowne by: he corrupteth the found doctrine of God most shamefully, he defileth the Sacramentes moste horribly, his ceremonies for the most part are blasphemious and superstitious, hee causeth wedlocke to be defiled detestably, he persecuteth innocent men that cleaue vnto Gods trueth, moste mercilesly. Contrariwise, this is not vnknowne nowe

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also through the goodnesse of God, that we Gospellers haue the sounde and vncorrupt doctrine, the proper and wholesome vse of the Sacramentes, and ceremonies according to the rule seruing vnto order, comelinesse, & edification, as our enemies themselues haue verie oftentimes confessed, and are constrained (though it be against their willes) to confesse yet still. It is not possible therefore to make any concorde, except one part giue ouer theyr opinion, and humbly agree to the truer iudgement which the other part is of. For euerie one ought to embrace the trueth, and to hate and detest lies vtterly. An honest man cannot in temporall matters fauour both lyes and the trueth at once: Howe much lesse may hee doe it in this cause wherein the glorie of God and the saluation of our soules is in hazard. Elias, when the people of Israel were in doubt, what religion it were best for them to take vnto, Baals Religion or that which Elias set forth by the commaundement of God, said vnto them with a singular stomake: How long halt you on both sides? If ý Lord be God, follow him. And if Baal be, then follow him. Harke also what Paul speaketh concerning this present cause, and agreeablie with the Prophetes owne words. Leade not (sayth hee) the yoke with the vnfaith-

full. 2. *Cor.* 6. For what part hath right with vnright? Or what fellowship hath light with darkenesse? What agreement is betweene Christ and Beliall? What part hath ỳ faithfull with the vnfaythfull? Or what adoe hath the temple of God with images? For you are the temple of the liuing God, as God sayth: How shall I dwel in them, and walk among them, and I will be theyr God, and they shal be my people, therefore get you out and depart from among them, sayth the Lorde. Touch no vncleane thing, and I shall receiue you, and will be your father, and you shall be my sonnes and daughters, sayth the Lord omnipotent. Open thine eares, heare. Thou hearest no seditious fellow, nor any newe sir Iohn hot Cockles, preach this, but the chosen vessell of God the Apostle of Christ speaketh it. He with most manifest playn words chargeth vs that we keepe no companie with the enemies of the Gospell. He sayth also that it is not possible for any creature, howe witticor howe craftie soeuer he be, to deuise agreement betweene trueth and falshoode, Christ and Antichrist, right and vnright. Thirdly hee sheweth a most weighty reason why: You are the temples of GOD, *Ergo* ye cannot be the temples of the Diuell to: as those doe nowe a dayes, which go about

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to gratifie both the Gospellers and the Papistes. Fourthly he expresseth the rewardes, which ought to followe the acknowledging of the true God and his worde that is giuen vs from heauen: that is that God himselfe will dwell in his companie, and giue them goodes both in this world and in the worlde to come for euer. Furthermore thinkest thou, it is without aduised cause, that the Church is called the wife of Christ alone? And a wife cannot hold her to two husbandes or mo: and if she do, shee breaketh her fidelitie, and iustly incurreth the paynes thereof. But we are all the espoused wife of Christ, which are of the same Church, that is to say, which haue acknowledged the worde of the trueth and confesse it. *Ergo* it is not lawfull for vs to couple out selues vnto mo husbandes than this one. Consider also I beseeche thee. Are not the Turkes and we enemies one agaynst the other. Then if anie man woulde beare fauour both to the Turkes and to our side after a like sorte and stoutly ayde both partes, shoulde we not say, that he not onely went about a matter not possible, but also rightly accuse him for a Traitor, and iudge him most worthie to be punished as Metius Suffetius was? What an honest and gay matter then thinke you it were, to serue both GOD

Why the Church is called the wife of Christ.

and the Diuel: To be indifferent to the truth and to falshood: And to fauour the Papistes and the Gospellers all alike: O what greeuous paynes shall such Traytors of Gods trueth suffer one day, not the punishment of Metius, but the paynes of Iudas Iscarioth. Would to God they could repent and pray for pardon at length. But peraduenture this so lamentable a lightnesse of mindes is the appointed payne for contemning the Gospell, and no small token that the dispatch of the world is comming neere at hand. For so prophecied the sonne of God himself: When the sonne of man commeth, think you, he shal finde any faith vpon earth? *Luke* 18.

Thirdly, Christ sayth: Let your communication be yea yea, and nay nay. For what is more then this, commeth of euill. In which saying he doth not onely forbid vnlawfull othes, but also variablenesse and vnconstancie both in our sayinges and doynges. That wee should not play whip Iacke and turne thee, when wee are among Papistes flattering them, and allowing many of theyr trinkets, which neuertheleſſe doe very sore blemishe the trueth: Contrariwise when wee haue to doe with the Gospellers, to hold with them also, and so chaunge as the time seruetb like Camelions, or Cattes of the

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mount. But that wee shoulde agree to the trueth, say plainely and constantly what wee thinke, and not to dally with doublefaced captious reasons. It is an olde saying: Trueth speaketh plainly. The histories praise ye deed of M. Pompilius, and so they may well: He, when he was sent Embassadour to Alexandria with certayne others, to commaund Antiochus in the Romanes name, to breake vp siege from the Citie, found Antiochus by chance standing vpon the shore. And when he had declared vnto him such matters as he had in commaundement, Antiochus shaped him an answere like a shipmans hose, and referred all to his friendes Counsell. Then Pompilius being greeued at his captious and ambiguous answere, because he thought some craftie pranke would be plaied at his return, sodainly made a circle with his staffe round about Antiochus in the sand where he stood, and sayd: It is the Senate and commons of Romes pleasure, that thou tell me plainly what thou wilt doe, before thou go out of this circle. The man was afrayd at these wordes, and sayd hee woulde depart out of hand. Then if an Heathen man thought scorne at a doubtfull and fraudulent answere, and made that sleightie Sir Antiochus perforce to tell what lay in his heart: how much

Pompilius.

more ought wee in a cause of much weightier importance to hate and detest them that of set purpose frame their wordes and answeres so as they may be taken to meane whether way a man will: Would to God there were some Pompilius that would compel these Antiochoes, to say as they thinke, and then surely there would be the lesse danger.

Fourthly, God requireth sounde doctrine and the true seruing of God as hee himselfe hath set them out vnto mankinde, to be plainly confessed of all without difference, both of man and woman, of what estate soeuer they be, and doth earnestly reprehend them that play mumbudget or denie them, as hee sayth in the third commaundement: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vayne. For hee commaundeth among other thinges, that Gods trueth be preached and confessed, and forbiddeth euery one to bewray or set out Gods religion to hire vnto the aduersaries, I meane so as he graunt eyther too much vnto them, or winke at matters of most weightie importance, that he confuteth not blasphemies: or behaue himselfe after such sorte, as the aduersaries can none otherwise iudge, but that their corrupt proceedinges and superstitious Godseruice are allowed for the moste part. Yea Christ goeth

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roundly to worke in requiring the trueth to be confessed, where hee sayth, Euerie one that shall confesse mee before men, him shall I also confesse before my father which is in heauen. And he that shall denie me before men, him will I also denie before my father which is in heauē. Mat.10. Thinkest thou that it may be called a confessing, when thou communicatest with the enemies of the Gospell, when thy drift is to make counterfeit concordaunces, and when thou wilt doe in some thinges as they doe, at least in outward appearance, and all for feare least thou be combred with hornets, and that thou mayest liue at thine owne ease? For after that the trueth is plainly and simply confessed, there followeth by and by the Crosse of persecution, hatred of the contrarie part and daunger bath of life and goodes: O wretched and feeble kinde of confessing. Yet for all this, we heare men many times crake and prate on this wise, wee will not shrinke an hayre breath from the trueth that we haue acknowledged, wee will stand as fast as walles of brasse in this Gospel, which we haue learned these three or foure yeares agoe, and knowne to be true, and haue had experience of it: wee will not be afrayd of anie threatninges, there shall no punish

ment nor cruell handling make vs afrayd.

Alas wagging reede, howe shouldest thou stand, howe shouldest thou confesse the Gospel when thou doest not onely shrinke in the hammes, but also fallest flat to the grounde, before anie storme of trouble arise and blowe vpon thee? For thou goest busily about to doe as Antichrist doth, euen in trifling matters, before it be required by name at thy handes, and all is good inough so thou may fill thy Paunch, lye in a soft bed, and sleepe in a whole skinne. What wouldest thou doe, if the hangman were euen nowe readie at thy back to strike off thy head, except thou wouldst receiue al Antichristes religion? Indeed this thy shrinking, and thy relenting and going at the first dash to the Papists part, proports plainly inough what thou wouldest doe. But yet I would haue thee to marke me the fearfull threatning that is expressly added, least thou dreame nowe in this carelesse securitie which thou art oppressed and blinded withall, that thou shalt escape vnpunished for euer. Albeit the payne seeme to be a great while in comming in this world, yet Christ threateneth that hee will be reuenged on them that denie him eyther manifestly or after a craftie fashion, in his iudgement after the ende of the worlde, when he shall iudge all mankind,

and

and will speake thus vnto them: I knowe you not. So he sayth. Whosoeuer is ashamed of me and my sayinges, the sonne of man shal also be ashamed of him, when he commeth in his maiestie, and the Maiestie of his Father and of his holy Angels. *Luke 9.* These wordes are not in vaine and of none effect, but the deede shall proue them true. Likewise, Christ requireth a playn confession of the gospel, where he saith: You are the light of the worlde. A Citie cannot be hidden that is set vpon a hill, neyther doe they kindle a candle, and thrust it vnder a bushell, but set it vpon a candlesticke, that it may giue light to all that bee in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good workes, and glorifie your father which is in heauen. *Math. 5.* I pray thee, what kinde of confessing is that, when it is necessary for vs all to stand in doubt, whether part a man must beare the more fauor to, and what religion a man must be the more bent vnto? For thou louest the Popish fashion, and makest thyselfe busie to vse it. And on the other side, thou holdest with the forme that the Gospellers vse, after a fashion. Is this to shine, and to profite other with thy light? Nay it is rather to put out the light if there

were

were anie, and to cast a mist ouer mens eyes, least the way of trueth might be knowne. If thou wouldest professe the truth plainly without dissembling, thou shouldest doubtlesse stirre vp very many with thine example, and make them more heartie to abide constant: By this reason also thou shouldest make the very enemies to beleeue, that the doctrine which thou hast learned, is such a maner of doctrine, that thou art ready to spend thy life for it if neede so required. Indeede this were to set the light of faith which is kindled in thy heart vpon an open high place, that such as walke in most thicke darknesse, might therof as it were of a most bright burning lamp, receiue light, & kindle some little sparks at thy candle, that they also might enter ỳ true way, and confes the truth also thēselues with thee.

Concerning Paules vocation thus the scripture speaketh: This is my chosen instrument, to beare my name before the Gentiles, and kinges, and the children of Israel. Although Paules owne vocation be heerein specially described, yet as touching the confession of the Gospell, it is a generall saying, and pertaineth to all sortes of people: That euery one according to his calling and power should professe the name of Christ before all men, and help to set it abroad also. Paul sayth,

I am

I am not ashamed of the Gospell. For it is the power of God vnto saluation to all that beleeue. *Rom.1.* Heerein is comprised a moste weightie reason, and belongeth to all folkes: and righteousnesse is giuen of GOD through the worde vnto all that receiue it by fayth: *Ergo*, let no man be ashamed of this worde, but let him confesse it manfully. Tell me, are they not ashamed of the Gospell, that almost abhorre the name of him, by whome GOD hath restored the light of the Gospell, and allowe eyther in part or in the whole, the Popish religion, which a little before they woonderfully detested, and beginne by little and litle to kisse the monster of Romes feete: And in a while, (except God say nay, they will receiue that Monstrous beast wholly home againe: Hereunto appertaineth the saying, Thou art neither colde nor hot, woulde to God thou were eyther colde or hote: *Apocalips 3.* In which saying euen this wicked wauering is reproued. There is a tale of a certaine Hermite and his guest. The Hermite as he walked forth of his Hermitage in the sharpe of Winter, met with a man by chance that wandred in the frost and Snowe, and was almost dead for colde. So the Hermite being moued with pitie, bringeth the man

A tale of an Hermite.

man home to his hermitage to refresh himselfe at the fire. There the colde fellow blew vpon his handes nowe and then: and when the hermite sawe it, hee asketh him why hee blewe on his handes: I blowe warme breath vpon my hands (quoth he) to warme me withall. Well, the hermite maketh him sit downe at the table with him, and hote meate was set on the board. The guest before he put a morsell in his mouth, alwayes blewe on it. The hermite questioneth with him agayne somewhat plainlier, why hee blewe on his meate. I blowe colder breath (quoth he) to coole my meate for it is to hote. Then the hermite being sodenly wroth, sayd hee coulde abide no such guest in his company, nor take him for his friend, that coulde breath both hote and colde, all out of one mouth, and so hee thrust him out of his house. It is a merry tale wherin wittie men haue signified: that it is not the part of an honest or a godly man, to hatch vp ambiguous, halting, or doublefaced reasons in ciuill matters, then specially in Gods causes. And men haue beene thought worthie neither to be loued nor to liue in the worlde, that coulde turne themselues into sundry fashions, like Proteus, and sometime praise the trueth, sometime dissemble it goodly, and holde with untrueth, as the time serued.

Fifthly

Fifthly: Take heede now. Christ sayth, He that is not with me, is against me. And he that gathereth not with me: scattereth abroad. *Luke* 12. In these wordes, not onely the playing Iacke of both sides which wee nowe reason of, is reproued, but also they are pronounced for pernitious enemies to the whole Church of Christ, that set theyr mind to halt on both sides after this maner, to the intent they would be in fauour both with the papistes the enemies of the Gospel, and with the Gospellers to, all alike. Two thinges Christ requireth. First that all be with him, Secondly, that all gather with him. First he giueth thee not libertie to linke thy selfe with his enemies the papistes, but will haue vs all as it were bondmen to him alone. And indeede it is of necessity that we be wholly coupled to him, to lay holde on God the father in him as the image of God, by him being the onely begotten sonne and fulfilling the entire obedience of the law perfitly, to be made the chosen children of God, to be garnished with his righteousnesse that hee obteined on the crosse, by his helpe to be deliuered from the Diuell, Death, and Hell, by him to be rayled agayne: and carried vp to heauen, and to be briefe, by him to honour and serue God truely both heere and in the worlde to come.

For

For without him there is no saluation nor life, without him there is no seruice that pleaseth God, as he himselfe sayth: I am the way, the trueth, and the life. Also, Without me ye can do nothing. *Iohn* 15. And Paul saith, In him it pleased the father that al fulnesse shall dwell, and by him to reconcile all thinges to himselfe, and by him to pacifie through the bloud of his crosse as well the thinges that are on earth, as the things that are in heauen. *Colloss.* 1. Those therefore that decline vnto them which corrupt the word of Christ with wicked opinions, mangle and teare the Sacramentes, and deuise strange vses vnto them, and set forth mo mediators and Sauiors, than Christ alone with his passion onely, and bid folkes pray not onely in the name of Christ, but also in the name of Mary, Peter, or Christopher, and set more by the obseruances that are deuised by men than them which God himselfe hath commaunded, and arrogantly ascribe the merite of Justification vnto them, it is manifest that they abide not with Christ, but are vndoubtedly fallen away and become Apostataes. Hearke therefore what iudgement Christ giueth: He is agaynst me, sayth he. And that euen the very proofe it selfe doth teach vs euidently enough. For these hal-

tors

tors on both sides fall first as it were headlong into Epicures opinions, and so they beginne to passe little vpon anie maner of religion: and then they waxe so presumptuously bolde, that they thinke it no danger for them, to dally euen with Christ himselfe at their owne pleasure: They perswade themselues, that Christ shall not know or not punishe their doublefaced doubtinges and craftie meaninges, wherewith their purpose is to prouide more for the bodie and liuing in this worlde, than for the glorie of Christ and for their owne soules. Moreouer they cause the true doctrine of the gospell and true seruing of God to be openlie suspect. For when they subscribe to some of the enemies proceedinges, and in some poyntes follow the forme of the aduersaries, and promise them largely: Then godly folkes fayth falleth sicke, yea they are made so much the weaker and weaker, that they beginne also to stand in doubt of all the religion that they had, they haue lesse deuotion, to heare and learne the worde of trueth and are more slacke in seruing of GOD. Then the vnlearned common sorte, which in deede is the greatest part of the people, seeketh, what occasion soeuer is giuen, to bee in fauour with the superiours, they are

glad

glad vnbidden to fall in their opinions, they shrinke manerly as they see the superiours shrinke, and to their vttermost power, they helpe forward and make their shrinking to be more then it would be. Then they that seeme to be of a most constant iudgement and are afrayd least the trueth and Church of GOD should catch anie harme, grow straightwaies into hatred with high and lowe And as for the best and most faythfull men, that are thought of a godly zeale to resist these craftie prancks neuer so litle, there are such craftie shiftes found, that they be wyped besides their ministeries and liuinges.

Furthermore the enemies, whom this applying or leaning is vnto, are confirmed in their errors: superstitions and blasphemies, and by that meanes many are hindred among them, that they cannot acknowledge their errour, and turne vnto repentance. Euery one thinketh streightway, that the quailing of the Gospellers is a notable argumẽt, that theirs is a false and a forged doctrine, which is now come almost to an ouerthrow. Contrariwise that the papistes doctrine is a moste true doctrine, whereunto they that haue hitherto renounced it shall come to it by little and litle againe. They are encouraged also thereby, not to distrust their attemptates, but to haue a

good

good hope that they shall hereafter by fraud and violence a great deale more surely bring to passe that which they coulde not compasse before being letted a long season and afrayd by reason of the light of the trueth, and constant standing to it. What is not this to beate an enuious heart inough against Christ, and to inuade and impeach his kingdome with al possible policies, through this blind madnes, and to betray and hyre out all the whole religion of Christ vnto the enemies? Iudas with a woonderfull goodly curteous good euen Maister, and with a too too sweete kisse, betrayes Christ. And so these haltours of both sides, they giue Christ a kisse, but they will haue money first of the enemies, which are quickly at their backe, and binde Christ, or couer Christes face, & clap him on the cheeke, and then bid him reede who bobbed him.

The other part of Christes sentence is. He that gathereth not with me. In these words Christ requireth not onely that wee be coupled to him secretly in our heartes, but also with such a maner of knotte, as openly trauaileth in gathering the true Church together: that is, that wee confesse him openly, whereby other may bee brought also to the true knowledge of the sonne of God, and vnto wholesome repentance. And they that do not

so, but mutter sounde doctrine secretly, as it were in a deepe darke denne, and when they are with the papistes cloke it marueilously, of them sayth Christ: They scatter abroad. And indeede they scatter cruelly abroad. For they minister matter vnto diuerse opinions, they cause men to be of contrary mindes one to an other, and open as it were a window vnto the Papistes to rage against the flocke of Christ the more boldly, the more freely, and the more cruelly: as experience declareth mough, and too much. And yet for all this we be striken into such a madnesse, and so horribly cast vp into a lewd minde (Alas therefore) that no man seeth such matters as he may feele euen at his fingers ends. I would haue thee therefore to print, and if it were possible, graue this saying of Christ most deeply in thy hart: He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad. And beseech God to open thine eies a little, and lighten thine vnderstanding, that thou mayest acknowledge thy self, that Christ condemneth thee for his enemie, if thou go on still, and play Iacke of both sides after this fashion, what can bee called a greater sinne then this? Peraduenture this sinne sleepeth now for a time, but it will awake at length, and waxe heauie. And would to God

that

that might be in this world, where mens consciences might receiue comfort againe, that they be not constrained at the day of doome, to heare an angry iudges sentence.

Sirthly. Weigh the matter it selfe, I beseeche thee. Doest not thou trauaile about a matter impossible? What shift canst thou make to be in friendship with both sides, and offend neither part, and yet doe nothing against thy conscience? Christ being nothing ware of this workmanly feate, sayth: No man can serue two masters. And *Paul* saith: If I went about to please men, I could not be the seruant of Christ. *Galath.* 1. If thou go about it then, thou shalt be faine perforce to doe very manie thinges contrary to true confessing.

Thou must needes bee sometime present at theyr Popishe Godseruice, as at Masse, where thy Christ is after a newe fashion spit vppon, scourged and crucified afreshe, and innumerable blasphemies are spewed out beside. Thou shalt oftentimes subscribe vnto such proceedinges as they deuise against godly men, contrarie to thy conscience: Thou shalt be constrained to helpe forward persecution agaynst the godly, either priuily or apparantly, thou canst not auoyd thy hands of most cruell blasphemies.

What? Shalt thou not by this meanes not onely forsake the poore Gospellers, as much as in the lieth, but also cruelly oppresse and murther them? Alas good man, how can thy conscience be quiet in this case, if thou referre it vnto God that searcheth the secretes of the conscience? Fayne, pretend, and excuse what thou wilt, yet it cannot bee denied, but thou hast hurled away the greatest part of true religion, and hast holden out thy forhead to receiue the Beastes marke: which turneth to the vndoing both of thy selfe and of the true Church. Neyther shalt thou deliuer thy conscience, before God, although afterward thou promise the Gospellers neuer so fayre, though thou be neuer so angry with the Papistes, and cursest them as blacke as a pot side, God seeth this hypocrisie of thine and hateth it. For as I haue often said before, God requireth a plaine, vpright, and constant confessing of the trueth. Finally this playing Iacke of both sides cannot continue nor be kept close long. Neede shall driue thee at length to burst out and tell, whither part thou holdest withall: and then thy counterfaiting, then thy sleighty shifts, and thine hipocritical heart shall appeare, and no man shall henceforth giue any credence vnto thee, more than to a dogge, and good cause why.

Seuenthly,

Seuenthly, Marke what euill successe, and what a naughtie end such playing Iacke of both sides hath, when a man would faine please both partes. I will rehearse thee an example or two, wherein thou mayst behold as in a glasse, both the vggly filthinesse of this practise, and the moste vngracious ende of it. One of the twelue Apostles whome Christ gate togither to theintent that being instructed with his heauenly doctrine and confirmed with Myracles they should be most excellent witnesses throughout all the wide worlde of Christ the Messias, and of the doctrine of saluation: I meane Iudas whose syrname was Iscarioth. He assayed to be a Iacke of both sides, and to be familiar with both partes, both with Christ, and with the Bishoppes of Ierusalem. When hee was in Christes companie, he communed manerly with him, and with the rest of his fellowes and brethren. And when hee came to the Bishops, he spake them fayre also and gaue them counsaile, how Christ should be taken, and by what pretence put to death. That matter for two or three dayes lay all whist, and was not knowne, albeit nothing could be hidden from Christ. In the meane time Iudas contented himselfe woonderfully much for inuenting such a shift as hee thought hee might please both partes

too too gayly withall. But marke what came of it. This playing Iacke of both sides, and leaning to both partes could not long be kept couert. For he had promised the Iewes that hee woulde shewe them Christ in the night. So when the appoynted houre came, he was demanded to go before them and leade the garrison where Christ shoulde be snatched vp to be guiltlesse put to death, what neede manie wordes? Because he would not be compted a false fellowe, nor be put to anie notable report of the part which hee fauoured, and was at that time the more afrayd of: he was compelled in this case openly to fall from that other parte, and companie himselfe with Christes enemies. But marke howe shamelesse hee was. He commeth with the rout of harnessed men, as though hee had beene Christes assured friend still, and biddeth him good euen Maister, and giueth him a kisse. While this was a dooing, the enemies thronged in by heapes, and layd handes and cordes vppon Christ. But Christ streightwayes called him Traytour, Iudas (sayth he) doest thou betray the sonne of man with a kisse? Shortly after, euen the selfe same night and the day following, this cruell deed beganne by little and little to awake in the vngratious fellowes heart, and wared so bigge,

bigge, that hee thought GOD and all that euer God made was angrie with him: and so hee brought the blood-price agayne, and hanged himselfe with his owne handes, and burst in the middest, so all the Guttes in his bellie flewe moste filthilie about hys heeles.

This Iudas therefore is an image and a Glasse for all Iackes of both sides to learne by, what a greeuous sinne they doe, and what a fearefull iudgement God hath in store for them, except they repent the sooner. Yet I will speake of one excellent Apostle, which assayd to play Iacke of both sides after a like fashion: Euen Peter that iolly sir, which promised stoutly that hee woulde take such part as Christ did, though it should cost him his life for it.

But it was not long before hee chaunged his purpose a great deale. For when hee was come into the iudgement hall vppon a good purpose to see what woulde be the ende of that hurlie burlie: and there by chaunce a Damsell layd to hys charge, that hee was a Disciple of this seditious fellowe that is nowe taken: then came so great a lightnesse and flying from persecution straight into hys minde, that hee thought it a very light trifeling matter, though hee denied Christ for a

time, and seemed to doe as the Iewes did, while he was among them. For he purposed doubtlesse, to keepe Christ stil in his heart for all that. For it is not to be thought, that Peter was dropped into so deepe a wickednesse, that he intended to throw his Christ quite out of his heart. But yet as stout a fellow as he was, with all his vnseasonable discretion and light dalying, he had such a foyle that he had almost serued himselfe as Iudas did, if God had not holden him vp.

For Christ remembred him of his fault with a winke, which made him so afrayd, that he wept bitterly, and forthwith hee got him out at the doores. He excused not himselfe, neither was the torment of his conscience eased for all that he was compelled by circumstances, I meane, for feare of bodily harme, to say one thing with his mouth, and thinke cleane contrary in his heart: but hee was as giltie as Iudas was, and shoulde haue beene damned as well as he, if hee had not risen vp agayne by fayth in Christ. Goe nowe and lay for thy selfe, that thou art moued by certaine circumstances to say one thing with thy mouth, and thinke another with thy heart. Pilate also had a mind to play Iacke of both sides, when hee confessed so often that Christ was giltlesse, and at length in the sight of all

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the Iewes and before Christes face: washed his handes, and yet for all that hee deliuered Christ to be nayled on the crosse.

He thought him blamelesse both towardes Christ, and towardes the Iewes, for hee would faine haue contented both partes, but yet all the water he had, coulde not stirre the vnrighteous Iudge from this sinne. For hee himselfe also was afterward made to suffer, and what hee did, and what paynes he threwe himselfe (wretched man) headlong into, it will appeare more largely at the daye of doome.

Well, set an example before thine eyes that chaunced very lately. There was in Italie one Franciscus Spiera, a right famous wise man in worldly affayres. He encreased so fast in the sincere doctrine of the Gospell, that he set it forth vnto other also very frankly and boldly. So when hee was betrayed by his backe friendes, and called to a reckoning, for feare of losse of body and goodes hee promised to recant and did so indeede. For his hope was, that albeit he was compelled to recant with his mouth, yet hee woulde keepe Christ whom he had professed, still in his hart, and satisfie his friendes secretly afterward. But he was stricken forthwith by the iudgement of GOD, and fell (moste wretched man)

man) into so deepe desperation and feeling of the wrathe of God and eternall damnation, that from that time forth there could no comfortable sayinges taken out of the fountaynes of holy Scripture ease him one iote, and so at last being ouercome with those continuall tormentes of conscience, hee died. Surely it is not without great cause that this horrible example falleth in these dayes. Doubtlesse our mercifull good God woulde fayne call vs backe from this sinne, least we shoulde (as God forbid) prouoke the like pain vppon our owne heades. But peraduenture these bee the destined raging furors of the worlde before the last day, which commeth shortly at hand: and that maketh the Deuill to bee the more madde angrie at Christ his treader downe, and prouoketh men the more fiercely to doe all kindes of sinne innumerable one in the necke of the other. Therefore let vs pray to God from the bottome of our heartes, that it would please him to bridle the Diuels outrage, to defend vs from so hainous sinnes, and to graunt vs speedie repentance. Amen.

Eightly. Christ seemeth to define this sin with fore wordes. All sinne and blasphemie shall be forgiuen vnto men. But the spirite of blasphemie shall not bee forgiuen,

giuen. And whosoeuer speaketh a word against the sonne of man, it shalbe forgiuen him. But he that speaketh a word against the holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiuen him, neither in this worlde, nor in the world to come. *Mat.* 12. This lesson he knitteth by and by vnto the saying that I alledged before: he ý is not with me, is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad. To betray the word vnto the papists agaynst a mans conscience, of set purpose, and with a certaine craftie cloking to shunne persecution (which euer followeth the preaching of the gospel) by vnlawful means, to be the first that maketh men to shrinke, to giue other occasion to stand in doubt, to confirme the papists in their errors by his backesliding, and to giue them occasion to persecute, not to reproue blasphemies and persecutions, or secretly to set them forward, and yet not to be contented to haue their sin found fault at, but to defend and say that the church and politicall order bee preserued by this meanes, where neuertheleſſe the ouerthrow of this Church is open before mens eies: how haynous a sinne this is, and how farre it is off from the sinne against the holy Ghost, be thou thy selfe iudge. I say not nay, but this sinne may bee forgiuen: but I feare least repen-

tance

tance be ouer hard to come by, yet I wishe it vnto al from the bottome of my heart. The matter is, because this sinne rauisheth and deceiueth men with the spiced appearance and sweetnesse of it. If thou be polluted with murther, whoredome, theft, or such like grosse sinnes, thou mayest a great deale more easily espie the ilfauouredness and payne of it, be afrayd of it in thy heart, and aske God mercie for Christes sake (for these sinnes are so farre out of rule, that they can be excused by no possible meane) that if thou were cralled in this sinne of wauering or dissembling and playing Iacke of both sides, for in this case there are innumerable circumstances that seeme to excuse the matter gayly, Wife, children, houshold, worldly substance, and manie other matters, that should not be put vnaduisedly in hazard. There is a great hope, that the trueth may be safe, the peace of the Church and of the politicall estates may be preserued, by this colourable cloking. Besides that, there bee men of high degree, that follow the same trace with these and such other reasons the diuell trimmeth vp this sinne so finely, that it is thought to be a small mote that lyeth in the heart. But marke the ende, a man cannot tell, what befalleth late in the euening. For a time might come, that it

would

would weigh peraduenture so heauie on thy heart, that thou wouldest thinke the weight of heauen and earth hanged on that one onely sinne. Therefore eftsoones I beseeche God graunt speedie repentance. For if the end be good, all is good. Heereunto accordeth the saying of Christ. When the vncleane spirite is gone out of a man hee walketh thorow waterlesse places seeking rest: And when he findeth none, he sayth. I will returne agayne vnto my house whence I came out. And when he commeth, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth hee, and taketh to him seuen other spirites worse than himselfe: And they enter in and dwell there. And the end of that man is worse than the beginning. *Luke* 11. What doe these players of both handes else than trimme vp the diuels parlour, and set open the doores for the diuell and his trayne to come in? For their consciences lie sleeping in securitie, contemning all maner of religions, and dally with the most manifest instrumentes of the diuell in Gods matters.

Finally, wherto is there so much waste labour made? For there shall neuer player of both handes come to his purpose by these meanes. For this is all their purposed end: to keepe peace, tranquilitie, lands, goodes, wife

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and children in safegard, what shift soeuer they make, though it be with neuer so naughtie a wile: and that they let for no labour. But they shall faile of their purpose. As by example. The Iewes cried out to haue Christ rid out of the world by any meanes, least the Romaines should come, and take their place, and vndoe their nation. But were they past that perill, when they were rid of Christ that seditious fellowe, as they called him? Nay, the matter that they were most afrayd of, fell by the iust iudgement of God vpon their heades plentifully. Doe not the heathen mens sayinges accord to the same purpose? *Incidit in Scillam, cupiens vitare Charibdin.* When he thought to shunne *Charibdis*, he dropped into *Scilla* a worse place. Also, *Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.* When fooles shun one vice, they run into a contrary worse. Christ sayth, He that woulde saue his life shall loose it: and hee that will loose his life for my sake shall saue it. For what auaileth it a man, if he win the whole world, & loose his own soule? Or what exchange shal a man giue to saue his soule? *Math.* 16. It lieth not in our wisedom, but it is the onely work of God to gouern the Church & to keep it in safegard. As it is not the worke of man but of God to preserue fruites from sharpe tem-

tempests in the sommer season. I haue heard gardiners tell (and it is worth the telling) howe they haue marked some thriftie forecasting husbandes that haue wiped of the snowe besides the blossomes of trees (for sometimes it is so sharpe weather in Germanie, that the trees are couered ouer with Snowe after the blossomes be come out) and yet they haue borne no fruit that yeere. Contrariwise of those trees that the Snow hath bin let alone vpon, God hath kept the soft tender blossoms, and they haue brought forth great plentie of fruit. These exãples happen not al by chance, but they do goodly reproue ỹ vnaduised temeritie of man, and declare the gouernment of God. And after the selfe same fashion, doth God gouerne his church: we learne by the histories of al ages, that the church of God hath florished and encreased moste specially, when it hath bin the sorest persecuted, contrary to al wise mens opinions and iudgementes, as it might be declared by the examples of al ages, but I will knitte vp the matter briefly. It is euident therefore, that a Christian may not lawfully, play the Neuter, or Iacke of both sides after this sorte that a shift may be found to keepe him in friendship with two partes, the one being contrary to the other (as the papistes and the Gospellers are) in Gods cau-

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ses and in matters pertaining to soulehealth. But these Neuters or Iacks of both sides which spring vp in all ages the diuell and all, would not be compted for blockeheads nor to speake as wise as a calfe, but that they haue great weightie reasons why they doe as they doe. First they woulde haue all men perswaded, that they intend nothing els by their practise, but the wealth and tranquilitie of the Church of God and their countrey. Indeede there can be no better nor more honourable matter spoken of, nor a ioyfuller thing heard of, than this intent, but if a man looke a little neerer vppon the matter, all is but twittle twattle talke of paynted fayre words to make fooles fayn. And the proofe of their high promises turne to the greatest harme both of the Church and the countrey, that can be. Thou wilt aske me, howe can that be? I will tell thee at a word: For these worldly hypocrites doe all thinges hypocritically, they seeke not after these good matters in the proper and right order and maner, as they ought to doe. For first of all they passe more vpon the sauegard of their owne thinges, and the aduancement and preseruation of their owne dignitie and power, than they doe vppon the glorie of God and wealth of their countrey, as it is manifest in that they will haue all maner of

religion

religion to serue their turne and commodities, that it make no disquietnesse in any condition. And for that cause there bee almost none made of those counsailes, but such men as are thought to bee skilled and practised in worldly affairs, and care more for corporall things, than thinges that be spirituall and euerlasting. As for those that be godly & faithfull ministers of the Church, they are hated as if they were firebrandes of sedition. They are snafled, that they shall not talke, to sharply against those most greedie rauening Wolfes that wertie vp Christes sheepe in euery corner. So they prouide, first for their houses, money, and bodies, and afterward howe the trueth may bee preserued. For this is the iudgement of the children of this world, that religion may a great deale more easily be kept, than honour, riches, power and safegard of mens bodies. For if these be once lost, it will be very hard to recouer them againe, or not possible at all: Where notwithstanding their chiefe and their first care ought to be for the defence of the trueth, as Christ commandeth: Seeke first the kingdom of God and the righteousnesse thereof, and all other thinges shalbe giuen you. *Math. 6.* Moreouer they are not afraid to frame their doings after Antichristes fashion, and to followe his

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tradition in no small matters: and that cleane erlie verlie. For whē they perceiue, that there can be no concordance made in the chiefe articles of the fayth without great damage of the trueth, they would faine make some shewe at least in externall matters to bleare mens eies withall: whereas they ought first to prouide for Gods worde, and afterward for externall matters.

To be shorte, they bend their studie and endeuour most principally to deceiue both God and men. First, God himselfe, in that they thinke he will be content, although men for dread of enemies and persecution and for loue of their own pelf confesse not ỳ truth directly, specially seeing they minde not to cast cleane away the truth that they haue acknowleged, and another day when the rage and furie of persecutors is mitigated & swaged, they will professe it more plainly. They thinke also to deceiue men by the same shift, in that they either keep silence, or promise that the worde will change in many things, or els shew themselues obedient in small trifling matters. What? Is this to do good vnto the Church and to the countrey, when the confessing of the gospel lyeth in the dust, which God would not haue kept in a mewe, but to stand forth and giue light, as it were in a high and a

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bright place: When the crosse of persecution (one of the trustie companions that the Gospell hath) is feared and auoyded by vnlawfull meanes: When the ministerie of the word is hindred, and ỳ ministers frayed away: When many mens hearts are tormented and wounded: When manie waxe faint hearted Gospellers, and fall headlong into godlesse pleasures of the worlde? When subiects bodies, landes, and goodes are at the papistes pleasure? When the persecutors haue free libertie to make hauocke: And when occasion is giuen to werrie vp all godly folkes: These and farre greater discommodities than these, are within the compasse and deuises of them that play on both hands. It is manifest therfore that it is nothing but vaine bibble babble of painted wordes, that they prated concerning the wealth of the Church and their countrie. Thus much touching the deuise that they make vaunt of. Nowe let vs marke their obiections, but I will be short.

They say thus, The tranquilitie of the Churche and the quietnesse of the countrey may be lawfully sought for by all possible meanes. Who sayth nay to that, except all the deuiles in hell lead him? But hearken how. It ought to be done in due maner, and by lawful meanes, in the iust order and to the

proper end that it is meant vnto. Yea say they but the cause why wee play on both handes, and keep companie somwhat with both parts is, that our expectation is to haue the Church in tranquilitie, and peace in the realm, when wee leaue some of our owne thinges vndone, and do as the papists doe in some things. For by this meanes the enemies malice is asswaged, that they deuoure not all at one chop. I answere. First I aske thee, why shoulde the enemies malice be put backe and asswaged, in anie wise, by this sound fayning and colourable cloking, tell me: Is it not because they take thine halting so, that thou wilt apply to them, and either cleane cast away, or elle abate a great deale of thy former earnestnesse, which thou vsedst a little before in confessing of the trueth: and that thou wilt consent vnto them at length, not onely in part but plainly altogither: Yea indeed is it. Now therefore weigh, whether it be not against the worde of God and thine owne conscience to seeke rest and peace after this fashion: that is, by outward appearance of denying of the trueth, what pretence soeuer it be: Marke the hystories among Gods people, what plagues God smote them withall, as often as they were afrayd of the mercilesse foraine Nations, and in changing Religion and bringing in hea-

thenish Godseruice, sought for peace and came in league with them. The confessing of the trueth ought to giue place to no maner of thing on the earth. For it pertaineth to the glorie of GOD. Therefore those that take too much care for the getting of the wealth of this world, and yet thinke that they wil afterward not vtterly forsake the trueth, had rather doubtlesse haue thinges of this world, than heauenly thinges, and feare the enemie of the body more than the enemie of the soule. And the most sure end of this kinde of peace making is to offend the godly which also wax faynt hearted by the example of their guides, and to conforme the papistes in their errors, and to allowe or at least to winke at the lies and blasphemies of the papistes a great deale too much. Persecution also against them that confesse the trueth, although they allow it not secretly in their heartes, yet at the least they speake not against it. This wee are taught also by the experience of all ages that wee should not heare the godly to be ouer curious, and lay for themselues too soone after such sort, as some that be learned vse to obiect with great bragges. For the enemies become the more cruell, and murther the confessors of the trueth the more mercilesly, in euery corner, by the instigation of their God Satan,

when they are thus applyed vnto or winked at, as they construe the matter: And is this to set the Church in rest and safegard, or to cause battaile and persecution against it. And whether this may bee done with a good conscience or not, thou thy selfe shalt see. For experience shalbe able easily to teach thee.

Why then, is there none agreement to be made with the enemies of the truth? Is there no way to be sought? Yes forsoothe, so it be done in the right order, & without iniury and reproch of the truth, and without slander it is both lawfull, yea and it is our speciall praier that it may be brought to passe. But to begin the matter and the wrong end before, as it is for the moste part, it is both dangerous and hurtfull, as I will speake no sorer a worde. The foundation and chiefe poynt of our religion is sound doctrine, reuealed from heauen out of the eternal Fathers bosome. That doctrine must needs leade the way, and all other matters of lesse necessitie must follow out of it. Therefore if thou goe about agreement, beginne heere, and see whether the aduersaries can be brought to this passe, to forsake their dreames and subscribe to Gods onely trueth: And to assent vnto the articles of the fayth rightly and truely set foorth among vs. If thou canst bring this about, doubtlesse

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the agreement will be verie easte concerning eternall matters that were instituted by mans authoritie. For the rule of Gods word shall best of all scoure and trimme such matters. And as for the superstitions that be annexed and the opinions concerning necessitie and merite, they shall vanishe and fall away of their owne accord. But when wilt thou bring this to passe? I feare least it will be too late. For I can scarcely perswade my selfe, that we shalbe shut of this kinde of men while the worlde goeth about. And it is an olde saying: Thou loosest thy labour in washing the man of Inde to make him white. And the order is most filthily turned vp side downe, when the agreement or conformitie of externall matters is first sought at their hands, which haue most sluttishly soiled those thinges with horrible superstitions and blasphemies, and powred them full, as it were of deadly poyson. Neither shalt thou bee able to make that swarme of men to set forth any thing so purely, but some contagious infection is mingled withall, which although it seeme not so at the first sight, yet anone after, it is vsed to expresse it selfe. Moreouer which is the greatest matter of all, they are most deadly enemies of the trueth, they allowe it not, no, they haue so hardned their heart, ẏ they will neuer allow

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the found doctrine, or articles of the fayth, truely and rightly as they be set forth among vs. And as long as they are at that resolute poynt, as the papistes are a great deale more stout than we, they will not suffer one hayre of their abuses in ceremonies, things (as we babble to them) of most light force, but they compt them of most weighty importance. And why? because they seeke saluation of soules in them. Whereto then makest thou thy selfe so busie, thou mad man? Whereto gorest thou about to clense the pudled Brooke, seeing the fountaine that the water commeth out of, is troubled and marred? Learne of the Phisicians, what is to be done in so weightie matters, and in what order a man should proceed. Doe not they that are anie whit well learned and circumspect, search the fountaine and originall roote of the disease in a mans body, and go about to heale it first, and then take cure of the outward partes afterward? If they did otherwise, might they not be reckned rather for botchers than phisicians, and marre all that they take in hand. Christ sayth, Eyther make the tree good, & the fruit of it good, or make the tree bad & the fruit of it bad, for the tree is known by the fruit. *Mat.* 12.

Christ prescribeth the order, that the tree must first be graffed naturally good & fruit-

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full, that good fruites may spring of it. And ceremonies are as it were fruites, that ought to grow out of ỳ sincere word of God. Therefore the chiefe point of forecast ought to be, that we should accord in the word or the articles of the faith. And when this cannot be obteined, the preposterous agreement is foolish and to no purpose, nay it is impossible to be brought to passe. Remember I beseech thee, that we reason not here of worldly affayres, let them haue their pleading place and their owne libertie, but our talke is of Gods matters, which we ought to commune godly and aduisedly of: For they haue not a nose of wax, to be turned at a mans pleasure as it is sayde that worldly lawes are sometimes abused. And may not a man lawfully cloke and colour the matter for a time? Did not Abraham denie Sara to be his wife oftener than once? Did not Dauid counterfait as though he had beene a foole in the presence of king Achis? Came not Nicodemus to our Lord in the night season, and in the day time made it goodly as though he had nothing to do with Christ.

I answere. First, for all that, they did not contrarie to the confession of the trueth, they allowed not manifest idolatries, nor the word of God to be depraued. But thou craftily

creepest

creepest into the enemies bosome to make them thy friendes and receiuest some of their proceedinges either in doctrine or in obseruances, which giueth them iust cause to be in hope, that thou wilt subscribe to all their peularie, and they mainteine all their errors the more stoutly, because they haue wonne ther to be an ayder, eyther withall thy heart or in countenance at least. Then the godly that see this geare, become faint-hearted, and cannot tell what they should recken of thee. And the bellycheere Epicures following thine example, fall to the enemies side twise so fast as thou doest. There is a great difference therefore betweene thee and Abraham and other such like. The matters be cleane contrary the one to the other, and the maner of their doings is vnlike. Besides ý, how canst thou tell, whether they did so only vpō their own head, or at Gods speciall commaundement? But as for thee, thou hast Gods commaundement to confesse the trueth before all men, which thou hast acknowledged and receiued. Therfore in this case when thou hast to doe among the papists, thou oughtest not to hide the truth but rather speake of it openly vnto thē. There is also no small difference between the weake that as yet vnderstand not the trueth, & them that haue acknowledged it and confessed it a

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a good while, and yet vpon a set purpose plaie Dumbudget, where it ought to bee plainly spoken. As for Nicodemus, he was yet weak, and so was Ioseph of Aramathia, of whome the scripture maketh no word or mention till Christ suffered. But yet Nicodemus when they laid their heads togither to make Christ away, obiected himselfe stoutly, and resisted their bloud-thirsty deuises to the vttermost of his power, and Ioseph was so well confirmed at the time of Christes passion, that he sticked not in the sight of many Iewes to take down Christes body from the crosse, and burie it most honourably & with most high reuerence. But, thou goest to the papistes of thine owne accord, and clokest and dissemblest with thē, not of infirmitie, nor ignorance, but vppon a false wile for temporall gaine sake, or for feare of temporal harmes. And yet among thy companions thou wilt looke to bee compted for a constant fauourer of the vncorrupt trueth, and a verie forward Christian. And so among the Papists thou wilt not be reckened a false wily child, and that plaieth Iudally and sleightly with them. Tell me, howe can this geare stand togither? I hope thou doest not say it commeth of weakenesse, and thine owne conscience will not suffer thee to call it a confession of the trueth. How then? Marry, thou

wilt

wilt say it is a good and a necessarie forecast to maintaine peace, and peradventure the papistes may be prouoked to receiue the trueth. Of the first I haue alreadie proued in fewe wordes, that peace is rather hindred by yeelding to the papistes. For they thinke they doe well to murder the godly when great men seeme to fauour their sides, though it be but with court holy water. Concerning the latter point we shall see anon, whether it be possible to draw the papistes to our iudgement, by our dissembling of the trueth. I will neuer thinke it like to be true, neither do I find example in anie histories, and though there were some examples, yet respecting the vntowardnesse of men at this day, I coulde scarce think it could be brought about. Therfore a homely plaine direct confession of the trueth seemeth to be best and most profitable. Salomon sayth, Better is open correction than hidden loue. *Pron.27.* Tush but they alledge Naaman Sirus also, which desired Eliseus also to dispence with him, that forasmuch as when the king went into the temple of his Idol, he vsed to leane vpon Naamans shoulders, hee might also go in with him, and bowe his bodie when the king did, and the Prophet granted him. Hereof they gather that they may lawfully counterfait in

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some things whē they are among the papists. or doe somewhat like their doinges. But they are in a wrong bore to bring in such examples. For singular examples are no vniuersal rules. But so it fareth, when they can imagin no sufficient cloke for the raine, they tip and turne euery thing that they thinke maketh for them, though it be neuer so little. Mine answere is therefore, that many men haue done many thinges which are singular and not vniuersall. Abraham would haue cut off his owne sonnes head when God bad him: but thou mayst not do so. God dispensed with his people to haue manie wiues at once, yet for all that thou mayest in this our age haue no mo wiues at once than one. And as for Naaman, he promised plainly, that he would neuer doe sacrifice to the Idol more: Besides that he laded two Moyles with the earth of Israel, which he powred vppon the place, least hee shouldе catch any infection of the earth that was consecrated vnto Idols. So that by hys absteining from the common sacrifices which he had vsed to do afore, he declareth euidently inough, that he misliked their Idolatrie. It was also nothing but a ciuill seruice, that he did there vnto the king when he leaned on his shoulders. Therefore there can no Iacke of both sides, defend his doinges with this example.

But the gentle Iackes of both sides start backe then to these temporall matters which trouble their mindes too too sore. Except (say they) men yeeld in some thinges to pacifie the papistes withall, then all will come to nought in a while, heauen and earth will goe together as they say. Doe you not see howe wretchedly minded manie haue bene? Why it is better to keepe the church in some state, than to let it be vndone altogither. Marry sir, those are worthy to be called wonderfull wise and well spoken men, that can prate on this fashion, and set out the matter, and make manie wordes about it. Contrariwise they are compted eyther for starke doltish fooles, or very wilfull persons, that doe godly dissent from them, or admonish them of some things that they ought to take aduised counsayle vpon.

Therefore I answere thus. Are yee not afrayd also least heauen fall? Indeede seeing you are men of such high witte and foresight, you ought to consider these two things. First that y building of heauen is now old inough. Secondly that it lacketh proppes in euery place: Therefore yee should aduise all folkes with a great long tale, not to looke long to liue in safegard, but euery body to seeke out in time for Fore holes to hide them in, or els

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(which were the more wittily done) to set proppes vnder heauen to hold it vp, as fast as they can. But to speake in good sadnesse, is it not a woonderfull rashe and vnreasonable shamelesse parte of men to babble and prate after this sorte? Are you those most wise and discreete warie men, that woulde make shift that the Church should not be in hatred of the highest estates of the worlde, and (to speake at a worde) that it should not be vnder the crosse of persecution? Peradventure you were borne too late. For you might in the first vpspring of the church haue holpen the matter anon.

The church hath in all ages suffred great stormes, and Christ tolde beforehand, that about the end of the world, furious outrage against godly people shoulde ware fiercer and fiercer. And God hath his considerations, why he suffereth vs now & then to be handled more hardly. Yea but the Church ought not to cast her selfe into such perils of her own accord. True it is, but to confesse the trueth to reproue Idolatrie and other wicked vices, is not rashly to pull the crosse vpon her head, as you dreame the matter. What doth the church desire more than peace? But yet in suche order and forme, that the confessing of the trueth lye not in the dust but stand vp manfully.

fully. For that must needes be done, though all the worlde shoulde be clattered in peeces. But your wisedome woulde haue the trueth kept close, or stand mewed at least, for feare of disquieting worldly commodities, and for feare of prouoking the papistes: Which is against the word of God that sayth: Be not afrayd of them that kill the bodie and cannot kill the soule: but rather be afrayd of him that is able to throw both soule and body into hell fire. Also, Blessed are you when they shall persecute you, and speake all that naught is agaynst you, lying for my sake. Also, The time shall come, that whosoeuer killeth you, shal think he doth God seruice. Also, Ye shalbe hated of all men for my names sake. But he that indureth still to the end shalbe saued. *Math.* 10. For his name sake he sayth, that is, for confessing of Christ heartily. Also, If any man come to me, and hate not his father and his mother, his wife and his children, his brethren, and sisters, and his owne life to, he cannot be my disciple. But you lowtes, you flint stones, you blocke-heads, you alles, you stubburne, & vntractable naughty pucks, why haue you no respect to your owne commodities and other mens to?

Matth. 10.

Matth. 5.

10. 16.

I answere, We are not such very alles,

nor so cleane without witte, that this reason cannot enter into our heades nor moue vs at all. But our iudgement is the confession of the truth, that ought to be preferred aboue al earthly things. And as for vs, wee cause no vproyes. We giue no larums, as they falsly lay to our charge, but we exhort all men diligently to the vttermost of our power to be constant in the worde of God, to giue themselues to earnest praiers, and vnto patience. We are well content to be doltes and fooles with the children of this world, but we can in no wise abide the slanderous name of sedition and vnnaturall stubburne churlishnesse.

Yea but the papistes are kindled by your stubburne stiffe standing. If you would somewhat hydle your toonges, and finde no fault with their lyes, or (to vse my tearmes more mauerly) with the state of the Papistes, and if you would seeme that yee were content to receiue some of the Papistes proceedinges, which are not of their owne nature wicked, then we are all cocke sure.

I answere. We are the seruantes of God and men, to the intent to declare without dread the trueth (which is not of our newe bringing foorth, but was shewed before our time, and wee haue it in the bookes of holie Scripture) that all may vnderstand, what the

will of God is. And also that we should openly shew and confute ẏ lyes that are contrarie to the onely truth of God, least men should be deceiued with them, and perish for euermore, as Paul numbreth it among the offices of a Bishop, to conuince them that be gainsayers: And Christ sayth, The holy Ghost shal reproue the worlde of sinne, of righteousnesse, and of iudgement *Iohn* 16. Moreouer our duetie is to rebuke and lay load vppon wicked liuing, that men may bee conuerted vnto God, and alke him mercy, as Paul saith, Rebuke them that offend openly before al mē, that the rest may be afrayd. 1. *Tim.* 5. Therefore lyes and lying spirits must needs be reproued not onely in a generalitie, but also by direct specialtie. And I pray thee, what is more necessarie? when a great man hath an enemie that layeth wayte to spoyle hys subiectes both of goodes and life, hee telleth them of him not in generall wordes onely, that all his subiectes may beware of him, but he expresseth his name directly that they may auoyd him?

What a mad matter is it then, if the like might not lawfully be done in this case, concerning the safegard of soule? Surely we that be shepheardes of mens soules, cannot choose but cry out vppon sheepe werrying wolfes,

wolfes. But whereto do I weary my toong? The children of this worlde will not heare this talke, but thinke alwaies in their drouſie dreames, that they ſhall haue a Church without the croſſe of perſecution.

Furthermore this obiection is no ſmall argument, that ſuch manner of men are as yet very rawe Chriſtians, and take a great deale too much vpon their owne witte, nay rather, that they are a great deale to raſhe, and take ſmall aduiſement, For they think themſelues able inough to ſearch out all the counſailes of God, after what ſorte hee will gouerne and vphold the Church: and ſo they make God a plaine foole, and impotent, as though he wiſt not how to relieue the Church from harmes in conuenient ſeaſon, and as though hee had none other ſhifte to deliuer his people from iniurie, but by this onely waie that they haue inuented, that is, in yeelding to the Papiſtes, and keeping the trueth vnder couert.

Were it not thy dutie to conſider that God is almightie and maruellous in hys ſayntes, as the Pſalme ſayth? Knoweſt thou that God knoweth not the ſecret counſails of his enemies the Papiſts? Art thou not adniſed, that all the haires of our head are numbred? And, No man ſhall ſnatche

thé out of my hand. Hast thou not marked that God hath in all ages preserued and glorified his Church euen in the middest of persecutions?

Although the aduersaries threaten neuer so sore, yet we must remember this saying of the 2. *Psalme*, He that dwelleth in the heauens shall laugh them to scorne, and the Lord shall flout them. Also, The Lord all to clattereth the counselles of the heathen. *Psal.* 32. Also, The kings heart is in the Lords hand: he will turne it which way it pleaseth him. *Prou.* 21. But I tell a tale to deafe men. It is their belly that maketh them so carefull and such dottie-polles. Thereof commeth their whimming. Finally, marke the proofe of the matter, what case thou bringest the Church into with thy counsels.

They say moreouer, there is very great hope, that the Papists may be allured by this craftie yeelding, to be the more indifferent to our doctrine by little and little. And it is a godly deuise to catche the enemies by this craft, and winne them vnto Christ. This is craftily and gayly spoken, and maketh many to beleeue it.

But I shall wipe away this reason at few wordes. Paul sayth: To the weake I became as weake, 1. *Corinth.* 9. In which place hee

prescri-

prescribeth a rule, howe the weake ought to be handled, that they starte not backe at the first dashe, but be brought in as it were by a traine faire and softly, least all should be condemned at once in the beginning with them that are oppressed with blindnesse and stand as yet in doubt. For the foundations of the truer doctrine must needes be first layd with them, & then orderly drawne out of errors, as it were out of a fowle deepe myrie lake. Neuertheles Paules mind is not to haue ý truth hidden, nor to play cole vnder candlesticke, but that such as be the lesse skilfull, should be friendly vsed at the first. And there is no doubt but there are among the popishe sorte some curable and very weakelinges indeede, and and namely among the lay people, which albeit they thirst after the pure doctrine of the Gospell, yet they are scrached still with some byyers. For they haue been brought vp in popish religion, and nulled in wicked opinions from their childhood vpward, that it will be very hard to plucke that from them. Such we would beare patiently withal, so that they would yeeld to sound doctrine, and shew themselues willing to learn. But yet the greatest part of the papistes (and namely the gouernors and such as be about them) are no weaklinges, but obstinate and stiffenecked persons.

which haue heard and red the pure doctrine of the Gospel a great while: and knowe the ground workes thereof which they are not able to answere too. But for all that they are at a full poynt, not to start one ynch from their popish drafte, blasphemies, nor Idolatries.

So yee may heare them many times against their conscience prate, that they will neuer swarue from the Catholike Church of Rome (the Popes Church, sauing your reuerence) while the breath is in their bodyes. What good then will thy fayre speech doe among them, that are so bent? Look also what tricks our aduersaries the Papists vse. They contend all that they can, to make vs reuoke and yeeld to them, rather than to apply themselues vnto vs. Are not the errors wherewith the vnlearneder sorte are wrapped in poperie againe, garnished with woonderfull iugling knackes? Is there not compulsion and moste cruell persecutions practised, to driue men through feare at least, to bring in and set vp the popishe religion againe? And so by false craft and violence their religion is established. And indeed the matter hath come gayly to passe in a short time. For there haue verie many forsaken the true christian religion in such places as wee had thought full little,

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and they go on with their iuggling bore euery day farther and farther.

Moreouer the holy Scripture teacheth, that Antichrist shall woonderfully haue the vpper hand till the worldes end. It is to no purpose therefore, and a vaine hope, that they can be drawen into our iudgment, either with our keeping of silence, or too much relenting.

And what concorde thinkest thou can bee made with Christ being offended and angry? And hee cannot choose but be offended, when the trueth is hidden to auoid persecution, and when the trueth is not plainly confessed, but some thinges are receiued to please the Papistes withall, that betoken a shrinking, though not in all mens hearts, yet in the most part. But what neede many wordes? The histories shew, that there haue mo of the aduersaries (as God hath woonderfully ordered the matter) alwayes come to the trueth by open and playn confessing, than by such shrinking backe. I would heare but of one man, that hath made any maner of signe, though it were neuer so litle, ý he embraced or alowed the trueth the rather through dissembling or yeelding. It is manifest that all men pick out a most sure argument thereof, that we haue hitherto mainteined erronious opinios, which we must needs now be ashamed and sorie for:

and that all their poperie is moste true, and most sure, because they dissemble nothing.

Therefore this is the pith and whole intent of all this adoe: That the belly must be cared for, and religion layd behind the post or throwne quite away. But seeing the bellie wanteth eares, let these fewe words presently suffise to beate downe the vnseasonable discretion of such as play Iacke on both sides, Peraduenture it were worth the labour to speake in this place also, how great, how greeuous and how manifold a sinne it is for a man to shewe himselfe so wagging and so wauering a Iacke of both sides, that some bodie may happen to be brought to ponder the matter somewhat more deepely. But this is alreadie spoken of, heere and there in many places. Therefore I will knitte vp at fewe wordes. First it is no small presumption and temeritie for a man to meddle with the gouernement of God, and to goe about to temper all thinges with his owne vayne philosophie. As one sayd that if there were no certaine God ý gouerneth all thinges, he would set all the world in order with his owne wisedome. O vaine saucie presumption of a creature, and blasphemie against the kingdome of Christ. For what doe these folkes else, that shunne the crosse of persecution so carefully

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and so curiously, with their dissembling or hyding of the trueth than made the gouernement of Christ in his church, with their own reason, that is, with their own fleshly, worldly and prosperous witte, & goe about to teach men that king Christ is a foole, and knoweth not how he should order his people, that is to say, hee shoulde suffer no body to come in hasard of life or goodes for the pure word of the Gospell, that the Church may be secure, carelesse and agree goodly with the enemies of the trueth, that is, the sheepe and wolfes togither. What could be more pleasant to reason, or (as ỳ scripture termeth it) to our flesh? But Christ doth with great forecast wipe away this dreame of reason. He that will follow me (saith he) let him take vp his crosse and follow me. Also, Ye shalbe hated of al men for my names sake. And Paul singeth the same song: All that will liue godly in Christ, shall suffer persecution. And it is to be specially noted that Christ saith. The disciple is not aboue his maister. And Paul sayth, We must needes be made like the image of God. Christ the king and head of his owne Church purchased and confirmed this his wonderfull kingdome which he hath vpon earth in the congregation of the godly with his passion and bloud-shed, and not by

running

running away from the crosse or dissembling of the trueth. And so all the Citizens of that kingdome must needs haue the same fashion, euen a bloudy fashion and a pitifull arayed fashion. For it is nothing els but the kingdome of the Crosse, nor euer was, nor euer shalbe ante other.

Compt the yeeres in order from the beginning vnto this day, and you shal see that there hath bin nothing in the church sauing afflictions and murthering of ỳ godly. And in this same fashion of the Crosse, Christ reioyceth to shew and bestow his mercie, power, wisdom, and helpe against the wisedome of man. So that hee destroyeth the wisedome of the wise, and confoundeth all philosophicall reasons.

The Poetes haue a fable of Phæton, that he was so presumptuously knacke hardie, as to climbe vpon ỳ sunne beame, for al that euer his father could say to him, dissuading hym and telling him beforehand what would come of it. But hee had no sooner begunne his enterprise, but the gouernour was driuen out like a wretche, and all the world wasted with fire. Euen so now our rash Phætontes mount vp on high, and presume to prescribe lawes to God himselfe, howe the Church must bee gouerned, and by what meanes the Crosse of persecution must bee auoyded, mary by a

much

much better way than God hath ordained, that is to say, not by plaine confessing of the trueth, not with praier, subiection, nor patient abiding for Gods helpe, but by crafty dissembling of the trueth, by yeelding to the Papistes, and other sleightie shiftes. But manie haue experience of Phætons fall, and stand looking on when the fire flameth, which they haue cast oyle into, to quenche it withall: Some of them giue ouer their enterprise, and some runne on, which except God turne them, shall haue the greater downfall. Paul reckneth this one onely wisedome of the godly to be the greatest wisedome of all other, that they are fooles before the worlde, they acknowledge the gouernement of God to be past mans reason, and submitte themselues wholly to the will of God. It is a great wickednesse therefore for a man to minde to frame the kingdome of Christ vnto his owne carnall and worldly mother wit. For hee offendeth against the first table. Secondly, howe haynous a sinne it is before Christ (for the word floursheth it ouer as finely as it can) a man may perceiue if it were by nothing els but this that Christ telleth beforehand that they shall be damned eternally, which make so much adoe to runne away and escape from the Crosse of persecution. For harken

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what he ſayth: If any man come to me and hate not his father & his mother, his wife and his children, his brethren and his ſiſters, & euen his owne life too, he cannot be my diſciple. *Luke* 14. Alſo, He that loueth father or mother more than he doth me, is not worthie of me. Againe, He that findeth his life ſhall looſe it, and hee that looſeth his life for my ſake, ſhall finde it, *Mat.* 10. Let no man maruell, why many that be croſſe ſhunners, make a tuſh at theſe ſayings. For it commeth very ſeldom in their mindes to thinke vppon euerlaſting life, but they had rather haue things preſent than tarry for thinges to come: they will not by hope of ſo deare a price, that is to ſay, ye price of their bloud. Thirdly, to auoyd the croſſe of perſecution after this ſorte, that is, in playing mumbudget, and doing ſome pointes of poperie as the enemies of the truth the papiſts do, is na ſmall likelihoode that they will denie Chriſt. For thou art aſhamed of this piteouſly mangled Chriſt, and of the trueth, which hath the Croſſe of perſecution for her moſte preſent companion. But Chriſt ſayth: He that is aſhamed of me and of my ſayings, the ſonne of man ſhalbe aſhamed of him when hee commeth in his maieſtie. *Luke* 9.

Fourthly. To be an hinderour to others,

and

and to giue occasion vnto offences, albeit the children of this world passe little for it, yet it is a haynous sin before God. For mens hearts are estranged from the kingdome of Christ, yea they be rather plucked away as it wer by the hand, and hurled into the mouth of hell.

All men for the most part are so affected by nature, that they looke vpon mens examples, whereby they eyther stand or fall, and specially the example of such men as haue beene in any estimation with the world. For when they see that their backsliding or craftie cloking auoydeth the crosse of persecution, then first of all their heartes quayle, doubt, and deuise diuers fashions. And at last they runne quite out of kinde, and fall all togither to godlesse voluptuous pleasures.

By this meanes the kingdome of heauen suffereth violent wrong, and Martirs waxe very geason, when men recken it for a speciall poynt of wisedome, to shift away the danger of suffering with Christ from them.

To be briefe, The Church or the number of Christians increaseth not (as he said) by the bloud of christians: the garden of Paradise is not watered with the slaughters of the godly, many a one is wiped besides that most glorious crowne which they ought to appeare before Christ in, Symon of Cirene is driuen

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from the Crosse that he should not beare it after Christ. But this is a very sore saying: woe be to that man, by whom offēce cōmeth.

Fifthly. By this halting of both sides the diuell hath a window set too too wide open to scatter all his lyes the farther abroad, and to plant and establishe them the more deepely. For those that be the wickedest persons of al, are confirmed euery one in their errours. For they haue an euident token, that is, the relenting of the other part, that all their poperie is agreeable to the trueth.

Then they daunce, then they triumph, then they crie fill the pot, as though they had won the field. And not that onely, but they are also incensed to enterprise the more boldly whatsoeuer they will against the godly, and to thinke they doe moste thanke worthy seruice vnto God in that behalfe. And albeit there chance some Iackes of both sides to escape, yet the rest of the common people is put farther in hasard, and the sword is sharp grounded to strike off theyr heades.

Sirthly. It is a greater and a more noysome sinne, than persecution it self. For there is no persecutiō that doth so much hurt in the Church, as that filthy relenting and dissembling of the trueth doth. For it marreth the the whole cause it selfe, so sore that the godly

must

must almost stand in doubt, whether they ought to suffer death for the truethes sake or not. These maner of tormentes doe comber godly mens mindes more greeuously, than any punishment in the world. Yea this sinne is more hurtful also to ỳ authours of it themselues, then if they persecuted Christians with their owne handes. For in almuch as persecution is a grosse sinne, a mans heart may acknowledge and abhorre it the more easily, and come to earnest repentance the more speedily. But the playing Iack of both sides is a sweete and a secret mischiefe, that is flourished ouer with goodly gay colours. Men thinke it may be done without offence to God or hurt of conscience. For their mind is on their halfepeny, that is to say, to preserue their bodies and goodes: Yea and it hath this cloke for the raine, that it is for the wealth of the Church. Therefore it will be very hard for folkes to bee brought to that point, to acknowledge so gay a matter to be sinne, and to abhorre it earnestly, and ask God mercie for it. So that it is a greater hope of repentrnce in an open blasphemous & bloudie persecutor, than in such a Iack of both sides.

Finally, Christ calleth it sinne agaynst the holy Ghost, not to be with him, nor to gather with him. Let not vs therefore suffer

this

this sinne to be easily interpreted with a faire fine tale: and let vs beseech the eternall father of our Lord Iesus Christ, to bring them that are bewitched and bemadded with these perswasions into the way againe, and graunt vs all through his holy spirite to be constant and patient, and to continue in stedfast hope of eternall life.

Now then what is to be done in such weightie matters of importance? what way, what path must we holde? Certainly it is the best, the surest, and most wholesome way for vs all to abide still in the kinges high way or the most sure beaten path, and to leaue and forsake all the by-walkes and round aboutes which craftie wits inuent, that wee may embrace and start not one ynch from the word of God, which by his benefite was mosse purely preaches in England in blessed king Edward the sixthes daies, so that no man can be ignorant of it, except hee make himselfe deafe and doltish of purpose.

Let vs learne and teach that heauenly worde which God hath reuealed in this doting age of the worlde, euery one according to his ductie without additions or corruptions brought in by man. And let vs confesse the truth, not ambiguously, but openlie, directly, and plaincly according to this text:

Thy

Thy word is a Lanterne to my feete. Also, I talked of thy testimonies in the presence of kings, and was put to my shame. For it is most certainly there is a great deale more good done by simple and plaine confessing of the Gospel, than by sluttish silence or likelihood of deniall. For God himselfe hath charged vs to confesse the truth, and cannot choose but loue them that do it with any danger or losse of their bodies or goodes. It is a a very goodly and a most true saying: Christian mens bloud is a seede, and in what field soeuer it is sowed, there spring vp Christian men moste plentiously thicke. And the experience of the Church accordeth with the saying, that this maner of speech was taken out of.

Let vs vnderstand that the proper righe colour of Gods Church is the bloudy crosse, but let vs settle our faith constantly vpon the promises concerning the presence and helpe of God, that God will either mitigate our miseries, howe horrible soeuer they be, or wipe them quite away, or els for a little space suffering he will do vs a greater good turne to endure for euermore. Let our faith also strengthen and cheare it selfe with these true considerations, that God is farre stronger, than all our enemies whether they be

bodily or ghostly: And in his hand our time is, in whome we liue, moue, and are. Let our enemies the papists grunt, Let them grinne: let them stamp and stare, and breath nothing els but sword, fire, and gunne-shot, Yet they shall not bee able to touch one haire of our head so much as with the tip of their finger, without the will and sufferance of God. And like as madde Dogges haue their limites, euen so tyrantes haue their limited places, beyond the which (Let them fayne, let them doe, let them stirre what they will) they shall not passe. The Scripture sayth: Bloudthirstie and deceitfull men shall not liue out halfe their age. *Psalm* 55. Also, I haue seen the wicked exalted and aduanced aboue the Cæder trees of Libanus. And I passed by and lo, hee was not: I sought him and his place was not found. *Psalme*. 37. And concerning the helpe of God these bee right comfortable sayings: You that are borne in my wombe, I will beare you still vntill your olde dayes, and vntill your head be gray. *Esay* 46. I haue made you, and I will sustaine you, I will beare you, and I will saue you, *Psalm* 34. Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lorde shall deliuer them out of them all, *Psalm*, 91. When hee is in trouble I am with him, I will de-

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liuer him, and I will glorifie him. Againe, Behold I am with you still vnto the ende of the worlde. No man shall take the sheepe out of my hand: And such like sentences.

It is certaine also, that the Church of God had neuer more glorie & dignitie, than when it was tossed and turmoyled with most extreame perils, as it were with most raging tempestes. For then God hath declared both his mercie and almightie power after a wonderfull sorte. The histories of holy Scripture tell vs examples at large, but I let them alone now for shortnesse sake. The Lords hand is not shortened yet. And albeit there can no maner of meanes be perceiued of mans reason, as one that had made shipwracke, and swimmeth in the middest of the sea, and seeth no hauen nor shoare to wade out at: yet God will cast vs one boord or other, and shewe vs some hauen, that wee may struggle out at length most happily. And although wee be drowned in the stormie tempestes, yet the bodie of the congregation shall abide safe and sound out of peraduenture. If God liue (as no man will call it in question) the Church must needes liue to, as Christ sayth: I liue, and you shall liue, *Iohn*, 14. Moreouer hee will saue that which is the very best thing in

vs, euen our soule, although the body be destroyed, according to these wordes: He that loseth his life for my sake shall saue it: that is to say, God shall strengthen vs with the holy ghost, so y we shalbe able cheerfully and stoutly to abide and ouercome all kind of calamities. God doth not traine euery bodie through the red sea, as hee did the people of Israel: He keepeth not euery man vnburnt in the firie furnaces, as he did Daniels companions: he preserueth not al folks from care among the hungry Lyons, as he did Daniell and others. There haue been very manie holy men and women swallowed vp and are swallowed vp yet still with the furious madnesse of the worlde, as it were with chaines of the earthe: many haue had their bowelles cast to wilde beastes, and into fire and water, but yet the mercifull bounteous good God hath not left them destitute of his helpe. Hee helpeth them, though not outwardly yet inwardly, so as their fayth groweth so strong and bigge, that they esteeme all the sorrowes and torments of their body for trifles in comparison of the life and glory to come: and reioyce that they must die for confessing of Christ.

Christ deliuered not the first Martir Stephan out of the hands of most mercilesse murtherers

cherers, he kept not the stones back, that they hurled at his head so violently, that his brains powred on the ground. Christ suffered this to be done, as though hee had not regarded this most blessed witnesse of his. But yet hee was not farre from him. For euen there all heauen was set wide open to the most blessed martir, that with his bodily eies he espied Christ standing at the fathers right hand, so as hee might see as it were, the gate open before his face, through the which he must step into euerlasting blessednesse. This matter doubtlesse was a moste sure token vnto Stephan, that Christ was present with him at his suffering, and the same made him to recken all the sorrowes that he suffered, but flea bytinges in respect of the glorie that hee should straight wayes enioy with his Christ. Therfore this opening and comforting that Christ shewed there, was doublesse more welcome and more ioyous vnto Stephan than if hee had deliuered him from that punishment, without the same reuelation. God suffered Laurence to be broyled on a Gryddyron for confessing of Christ. But hee preserued his soule and his faith after such sorte, that hee scarcely felt the coles that burned his bodie all ouer: And then when his soule was going out of his mouth, yet hee spake to Decius

with a mightie stout stomacke: O thou tyrant, if thou thinke thy greedie minde almost satisfied, cut out a piece of me, and thrust it in thy mouth, that thou mayst take thy fill, and stanch thy stomacke against me. This moste holy man had not this iolly heartie courage, nor spake these wordes of himselfe, but Emanuell that dwelled in him, and the holy ghost that kindled his courage with a feruent fayth and hope of eternall life, vpheld and encouraged Laurence after this sorte.

Therefore let vs not go about to put away perill from vs by mans mother wit with the iniurie of Gods worde and confessing of Christ: Let vs not bring the doting deuises of our own reason into Christes kingdome. For God hath determined this absolutely with himselfe that he will gouerne his church after another fashion than we thinke it conuenient: That is, he will suffer it to be pressed with the crosse of persecution, but not oppressed: Exercised, but not destroyed. For that he taketh to be the most wholesome way for all godly men and women. There is so much wickednesse naturally grauen into all men, that in prosperitie, and when they haue the worlde at will, they can easily looke on high, waxe stout, play the ruffers, vse Gods benefites without gramercie: cast all care

touching

touching earnest repentance out of their hart: they praie coldly and fayntly, yea they neglect GOD and set more by temporall and carnall commodities, than by God, and are more afrayd of the worlde than of God himselfe.

This is the verie Schoolehouse of ỹ diuel himselfe, wherein he instructeth and bringeth vp his minions meet for his owne court. By reason whereof rest and peace do many times a great deale more harme to the Church of God, than warre, bannishment, and persecution it selfe. But God doth wittingly holde his people vnder the holy crosse, as it were in a wrastling place, to teach them continual repentance, that godly men and women may confesse their sinnes to be no small matters, seeing they are the occasions of calamities, that they may aske forgiuenesse by fayth for Christes sake, and that they may giue themselues to praier the more feruently (for without afflictions and euill intreating, prayer wareth colde) and also that the mercie and goodnesse of God, may the more readily be perceiued, yea and the mightie power of God also which is marueilous in his Saintes, and riddeth them out of mane encombrances farre otherwise than mans reason doth perceiue. Therefore Dauid sayth: well is

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me that thou pulledst me vnder foot, that I might learn thy righteousnesse. *Psal* 119. Againe, The Lorde in his chastising hath chastised me, and not giuen me ouer vnto death. *Psal.* 113. I came not to send peace sayth Christ, but a sword. *Matth.* 10. Also, In the world you shal haue afflictiō. *Ioh.* 16. When men stumble at this stumbling stone and doe either transforme the kingdome of Christ into a kingdome of the world, or otherwise woulde auoyd some perils after the maner of man, that is to know, in turning religion as the higher powers will: then hath God euer from ỳ beginning found this mean, that he hath all to clattered and confounded, euen the best counselles that mans reason could deuise, according to the old prouerbe: *Homo proponit, Deus disponit.* Man purposeth, and God disposeth, that is, God ordereth the matter another way. Also, Make your selues strong and you shall be ouercome. Lay your heades togither, and your counsaile shall not take effect: speake the word, and it shall not come to passe, for the Lord is with vs. *Esay*, 8.

Notwithstanding these wordes ought not to be taken captiously of any man to misreporte me. I say not that the Church shoulde wishe to be in danger, nor thrust it selfe willingly

lingly into perill. For what were that els, but tempting of God: And who sayth nay, (except he be beastly madde) but it is necessary and profitable for the Church to haue some quietnesse: For howe could the church be planted, and the people rightly instructed in the doctrine of saluation and true seruing of God, if the Church were tossed too and fro with continuall hurlie burlies, and had no abiding place for a season at leastway: God of his great goodnesse doth sometimes spare his Church some Halcion dayes, which men should make much of, and thanke God most diligently for them. But I talke heere of the common fashion of the Church. It hath not one certaine standing, and perpetuall place to rest alwayes in, but it wandereth about as a stranger for the mou. part.

Moreouer there are none but vnlawfull meanes of auoyding perils and temptations, reproued: that is to say, such as are practised with the iniury of the heauenly word of God, or doe let men from confessing of the trueth, which must needes be plainly done without any lets.

Let vs also beware of this with all diligent foresight, that we put not our trust in mans strength, for vaine is the health of man. And yet we fraile vessels are woonderfully bene

to doe so. For where as the helpe of God for the moste parte is hidden and maruellous, that maketh vs to hang vppon those thinges, that wee are able to atteine in a maner with our owne sences. And the matter doth very much encomber euen them that bee godly. But let vs therefore fasten our assured faithfull trust rather vpon God alone. For he that trusteth him shal standfast like the mount Syon and neuer be moued, *Psalm* 125. And better it is to trust in the Lorde, than to trust in man. Better it is to trust in the Lord, than to trust in princes, *Psalme* 118. Againe; The Lord saueth neither in sword nor in speare, 1, *Reg*, 17. And, I will saue them in the Lorde their God, and I will not saue them in bowe, nor in sword, nor in battaile, neither in horses, nor in horsemen. *Ose*, 1. And in this behalfe God doth for the moste part teache vs by experience, how vayne and what lost labour it is to lay to the onely succour of mans helpe. For he strippeth men almost out of all the helpes that they hanged vpon, and afterward hee sheweth euidently, that hee is the onely defender and Sauiour of hys Church, that men shoulde not thanke their owne power for one iote, but ascribe all to God alone, with whome it is all one to saue either in many or

in fewe, yea and without all visible and mans helping meanes. Howbeit I woulde not haue any man to make cauillation at my saying, as though wee shoulde cast away all helpes and lawfull meanes that may be had without offence. For necessitie requireth vs to pull away our trust onely from them, that we may trust in nothing but in God alone, which is the buckler, shielde, and sure fortresse of all beleeuers, so as in this behalfe the Church may bee discerned from the Heathens. For the safegard of the Church dependeth of the Lorde, and as for the heathen they put their hope in themselues and in their worldly powers. Aiax sayth in Sophocles, that euery coward getteth the victorie, if God helpe him: but he would haue the victorie without God. But Dauid sayth: Thou Lord art my preseruer, thou art my glorie and the lifter vp of my head. Thou hast striken all them that were agaynst mee without a cause, thou hast dashed out the teeth of Sinners. *Psalme* 3. The Lord is my light and my saluation, whome shall I be afrayd of? The Lord is protectour of my life, whome shall I be afrayd of? *Psalme* 77. The Lorde is my helper, and my defender, and in him my heart hath trusted, and I was holpen. *Psal.* 28.

Thou

Thou giuest kings their safegard. *Psal*,143.

Let vs also submit our selues vnto the will of God, when wee see tempestious stormes bluster agaynst vs on euery side as thicke as hayle: Let vs not grunt agaynst so many afflictions, nor bee angry with God and his word: let vs not shake off the confessing of the trueth, Let vs not runne vnto vnlawfull meanes, but sticke hard, and go through with the matter, and looke patiently for helpe at Gods hand, as the Psalme saith: Looke for the Lord, sticke to it manfully, be of good cheere, and abide the Lords leisure. *Psal*.27 The Lord became the poore mans refuge, and his helpe at a pinch when hee was in trouble *Psal*.10. In another place, If he tarrie, abide his comming: for he will come and not tarrie. *Aba*. 2.

For this obedience God requireth at our handes euen in corporall thinges, that wee should submit our selues vnto his wil, and exercise patience. But that is also past our power: and therfore we are promised help of ye holy Ghost, which we must pray diligently for. As 37. Psalme biddeth vs: Submit thy selfe vnto the Lord, and pray vnto him. In which words these two matters are most goodly knitte together: First patience and subiection, which acknowledgeth the will

and

and chastisment of God. Secondarily praier, which telleth vs where and after what maner we must craue helpe, euen of God alone with feruent and continuall gronings, and cheere our heartes with his comfort. Christ promiseth a comforter, without whom we fall sicke all in a pitifull case, yea we rather melt away, as it were butter with the heate of the sunne.

Watch and pray, sayth Christ vnto his disples, that you enter not into temptation. And what the efficacie of true praier is, the histories of holy Scripture make report, that the greatest matters of all are many times obteined and brought to passe by godly mens prayers. And vnto prayer there belong verie many thinges, which cannot bee had in the Church but out of the Rolles of Gods records: As to acknowledge God, to repent, to beleeue constantly in the Mediatour, to know the promises concerning thinges both bodily and ghostly, to knowe what maner a one the church is vsed to be, to haue sure hope of euerlasting life, and to looke for helpe or for mitigation of our paynes in this life: and such like.

Finally, let vs consider and consider again, how glorious a case they halbe in, at the comming of our Lorde Iesu Christ, that haue manfully shedde their bloud for confessing of him.

him. When they shall stand there, one that was sawed asunder, another that had his head stricken off: one that was runne in with a sword, another that was twitched vp in an alter: one that was stoned to death, another that was drowned in the water: one that was burned, another that was deuoured of wilde beastes: and another that was pyned for hunger. What brooches, and gallant aray shall these thinges be in their bodies? What a merry meeting shall there bee of Christ and these his witnesses? How honourably shall he welcome them? What crownes shall he decke them withall? What a goodly sight will it be of them vnto all, both angels and men? This dignitie ohn expresseth in fewe words: These [illegible] the saints that haue shed their bloud for the testament of their God. Let vs therefore diligently bend our selues to the same end.

FINIS.

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